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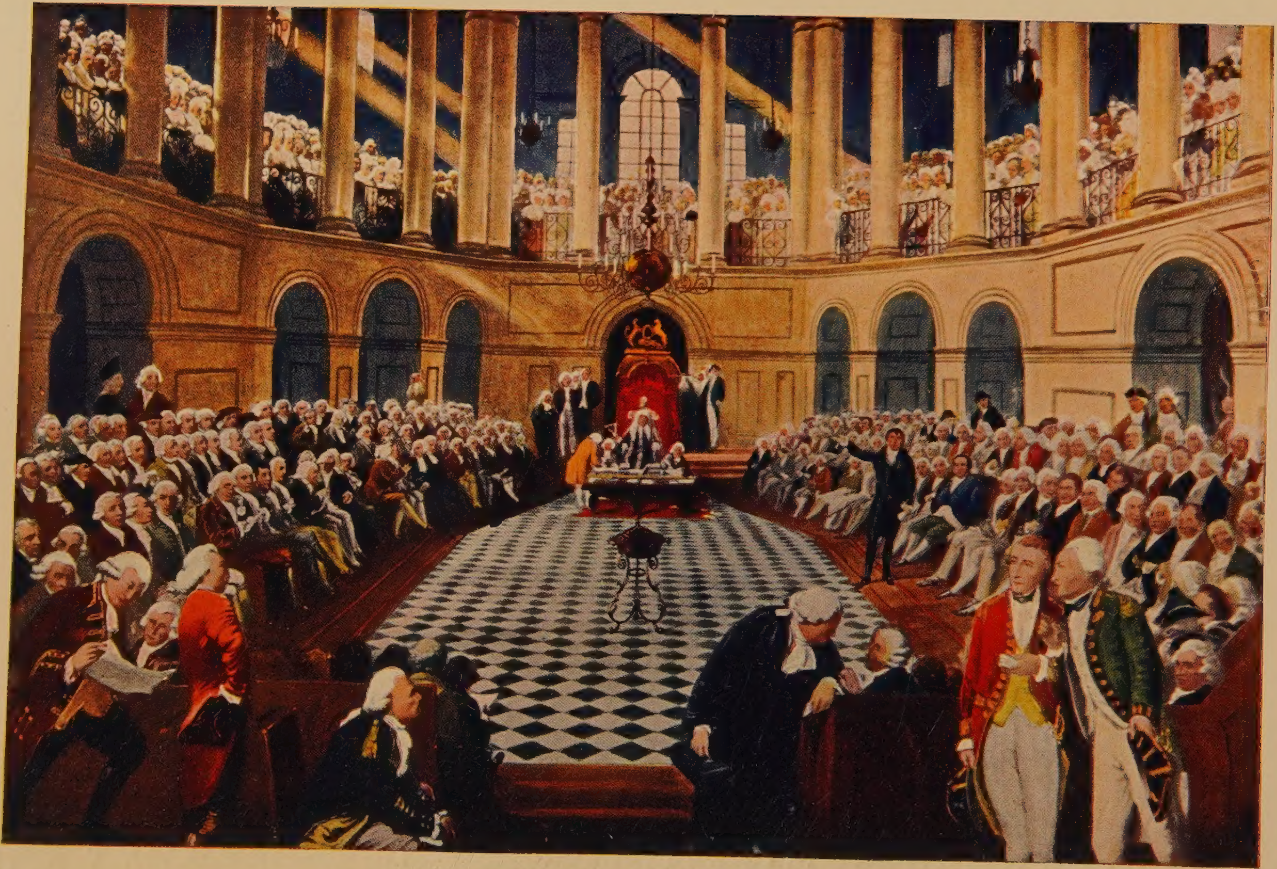

THE IRISH HOUSE OF COMMONS

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HISTORY OF IRELAND

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

GRATTAN'S PARLIAMENT

PAGE
What Parliament did and failed to do in 1782 . . . 1
Repeal and Renunciation 2
Parliamentary Reform 4
Volunteer Convention 5
Flood's Reform Bill 6
Other Questions in Parliament 7
The Question of Tariffs 8
Orde's Commercial Propositions 9
Orde's Education Scheme 11
Whiteboyism 12
Grattan and Tithes 13
Flood and Curran 14
The Regency Question 15
The Catholics 17
Minor Reforms 20
The Fitzwilliam Episode 21

CHAPTER II

THE UNITED IRISHMEN

The Concessions of 1782 incomplete 24
Peep of Day Boys and Defenders 25
Opinion in Belfast 26
Wolfe Tone 27
The United Irish Society 28
The Government favours Coercion rather than Concession . . 30

PAGE
Education of the Priests 32
Maynooth College founded 33
Camden and Concessions 33
The Defenders 35
The Orangemen 35
Progress of the United Irish Society 37
Tone leaves Ireland 38
Tone in Paris 39
Hoche's Expedition 39
England's Difficulties 40
Driving the People to Desperation 41
No Hope from Parliament 43
England's Enemies 44
Government Proclamations 46
The Approach of Rebellion 46

CHAPTER III

THE REBELLION OF 1798

The "Step-ladder" 48
Camden's Position 50
The Informers 51
The United Irishmen 54
Lord Edward FitzGerald 55
Arrests and Martial Law 56
Outrages by Soldiers 57
Flogging 58
Arrest and Death of Lord Edward 59
The Rebellion begins 60
The Rebellion in Wexford 61
Rebel Victories 62
Newtownbarry 64
Battle of New Ross 65
Tubberneering 67
Battle of Arklow 67
Scullabogue and Wexford 69
Battle of Vinegar Hill 70
Outbreaks in Antrim and Down 71

PAGE
Desultory Fighting 71
Lake's Cruelties 72
Camden succeeded by Cornwallis 73
The State Prisoners 74
Humbert's Invasion 75
End of the Rebellion 76

CHAPTER IV

THE UNION

The Union under Cromwell 77
Unionists after the Restoration 77
Unionists in the Eighteenth Century 78
A Union unpopular 78
Conflicts between Irish and British Parliaments . . . 79
Pitt for a Union 80
Pitt's Irish Supporters 81
Cooke's Pamphlet 83
The Anti-Unionists 84
The Address in 1799 85
Lord Castlereagh 86
The Opposition Leaders 87
Debate on the Address 87
Unionists defeated 88
Pitt's Speech in the British Parliament 89
Foster's Speech in the Irish Parliament 89
Means employed to pass the Union 91
Position of Cornwallis 93
The Catholics and the Union 94
The Session of 1800 96
Grattan's Return to Parliament 97
Castlereagh introduces his Plan of Union 98
Securing a Unionist Majority 100
Measures of the Opposition 101
Progress of the Union 102
Passes both Houses 103
Scotch and Irish Unions compared 103
Why the Irish Union passed 104

CHAPTER V

THE CATHOLIC QUESTION

PAGE
Unionist and Anti-Unionist Prophecies . . . 106
Rewards to Unionists . . . 106
Treatment of the Catholics . . . 107
Pitt's Duplicity . . . 109
Pitt's Death . . . 110
Irish Chief Secretaries . . . 111
Lord Clare . . . 112
Robert Emmet's Insurrection . . . 113
The Catholic Question in Parliament . . . 117
The "Ministry of All the Talents" . . . 118
The "No-Popery Ministry" . . . 119
The Threshers . . . 119
The Veto . . . 119
The Catholic Leaders . . . 120
Daniel O'Connell . . . 121
The Catholic Prospects brightening . . . 122
Peel and O'Connell . . . 122
The Veto again . . . 124
Death of Grattan . . . 124
The Union proved a Failure . . . 125
George II. visits Ireland . . . 127
O'Connell and Sheil found the Catholic Association . . . 128
Plunkett's Catholic Relief Bill . . . 128
Strength of the Catholic Association . . . 129
Catholic Relief Bill rejected in the Lords . . . 130
The New Catholic Association . . . 130
The Catholic Question in 1827-1828 . . . 131
The Clare Election . . . 133
Danger of Collision between Protestants and Catholics . . . 136
Catholic Relief Bill passed . . . 137

CHAPTER VI

AFTER EMANCIPATION

PAGE
O'Connell's Power in 1829 140
False Hopes of the People 141
The O'Connell Tribute 142
O'Connell agitates for Repeal 142
The Whigs in Office 144
O'Connell and Anglesey 144
O'Connell and the Whigs 146
Tithe War 147
Coercion Bill 148
Stanley's National Education Scheme 149
The New Chief Secretary 150
Whigs replaced by Tories 151
Death of Dr. Doyle 151
John MacHale 152
O'Connell's Position 153
Lichfield House Compact 154
Irish Reforms 155
Thomas Drummond, Irish Under-Secretary 157
The Whigs replaced by Tories 164

CHAPTER VII

THE REPEAL AGITATION

O'Connell and the Union 165
O'Connell advocates Repeal 166
O'Connell's Party 168
Repeal in Parliament 168
MacHale, O'Connell, and the Whigs 169
The Repeal Association 171
Davis, Dillon, and Duffy 172
The Nation 173
Dublin Corporation and Repeal 174
Progress of the Repeal Association 175
The Monster Meetings 176
The Clontarf Meeting 179
O'Connell prosecuted 180

PAGE
O'Connell in Prison 181
O'Connell released 182
The Repeal Association 183
O'Connell's New Policy 183
John O'Connell 184
The Queen's Colleges 185
Young and Old Irelanders 186
Death of Davis 187

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAMINE

Past Famines 189
The Blight 191
Peel and the Famine 193
Repeal of the Corn Laws 194
Peel defeated 195
Progress of the Famine 195
Government Measures 196
Young Irelanders and Repealers quarrel 198
The Famine in 1847 199
Relief from Abroad 201
Terrible Suffering 202
O'Connell's Last Days 204
Death of O'Connell 205
Estimate of his Policy 206
Evictions and Emigration 208
Preparations for Rebellion 209
Rebellion breaks out 210
Wretched State of the Country 211
Demoralisation of the People 212

CHAPTER IX

O'CONNELL'S SUCCESSORS

Relations between Landlords and Tenants 214
The Landlords' Power 215
Land Bills rejected 216

PAGE
The Devon Commission 216
The Great Clearances 218
The Encumbered Estates Act 220
Ireland in 1850 221
Tenant Right Conference 222
Independent Opposition 224
Restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy in England . . . 224
The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill 225
The Irish Brigade 227
William Keogh 227
State of Parties in Parliament 228
Treachery of Keogh and Sadleir 229
Dr. Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin 230
Last Days of Lucas 232
Duffy and Moore 233
Changes of Government 234
Evictions, Emigration, and Outrages 236

CHAPTER X

FENIANISM AND REFORM

The Irish Tenants 238
The Landlords 239
Ireland in Parliament 242
Parliamentary Candidates and their Promises . . . 242
Lord Carlisle 244
The Phœnix Society 244
The Irish Republican Brotherhood 245
The Irish in America 246
Fenianism in Ireland 247
Arrest of the Leaders 248
Fenian Insurrection 248
The Dock and the Scaffold 249
Mr. John Bright 250
Reforms wanted—The Irish State Church 251
Mr. Gladstone 252
Mr. Gladstone's Church Bill 254
Land Bill passed 256

CHAPTER XI

THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

PAGE
Home Rule Conference 257
Mr. Butt 257
Progress of the New Movement 259
Home Rule League 259
Gladstone's University Bill 260
General Election of 1874 262
Mr. Butt's Party 262
No Progress made 263
Beginning of Obstruction 264
Mr. Biggar 264
Mr. Parnell 266
The Obstruction Policy 267
Parnell and Butt disagree 269
Death of Butt 272

LIST OF PLATES

HALF-VOLUME V

FACING PAGE

Irish House of Commons . . . . . *Frontispiece*

Henry Grattan 20

The Arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald 59

Viscount Castlereagh. William Pitt 89

Theobald Wolfe Tone. Robert Emmet. Thomas Davis. Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin 162

Lord Beaconsfield. John Bright. Sir Robert Peel. Thomas Drummond. Lord John Russell. Lord Stanley . . 194

Daniel O'Connell 206

William Ewart Gladstone in 1868 253

Charles Stewart Parnell 266

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HISTORY OF IRELAND

CHAPTER I

Grattan's Parliament

THE year 1782 was a memorable one in Irish history. For the first time for centuries the Irish Parliament was a reality and not a shadow, a legislature with the power to legislate. Poyning's Act was gone, and so also was the Act "for better securing the dependency of Ireland upon the Crown of Great Britain," whereby the English Parliament asserted its right to legislate for Ireland, and took away the appellate jurisdiction of the Irish House of Lords.[1] The Irish Mutiny Act had been assimilated to that of England; a Judge's Tenure Act made the Irish judges independent; a Habeas Corpus Act secured a speedy trial for prisoners, and put an end to capricious imprisonment; Irish trade ceased to be hampered by vexatious commercial restrictions; and there was a further and substantial relaxation of the penal laws. This was doing much in a short time, but much remained yet to do. The Catholics still laboured under grievous restrictions, and being excluded from Parliament and deprived of the Parliamentary franchise were placed beyond the pale of the Constitution. The farmer was crushed under the weight of excessive rent, and ground down by the extortions of the tithe-farmers. Parliament itself was unrepresentative and corrupt. Jobbery and peculation abounded.

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[1] Plowden's *Historical Review*, i. 249 (copy of the Act).

Justice was the privilege of the rich rather than the right of all. And in all these directions there was a wide field for the employment of the newly-acquired legislative powers. There were, further, many inequalities of taxation, infant industries to be fostered and new ones to be called into existence, and decayed manufactures to be revived. Nor was the Irish Parliament unequal to the task of righting so many wrongs and curing so many ills if we remember the abilities of some of its members. Grattan and Flood, Yelverton and Bushe, Daly and Burgh, Foster and Fitzgibbon, and many others were not unworthy of the English Parliament at its best; and Grattan's eloquence raised him to a level with Pitt and Fox and Burke.

Unanimity and public spirit only were required, and had these been secured the progress of beneficent legislation would have been rapid. But at the very outset serious difficulties arose. In May 1782, in answer to the Viceroy's speech, Grattan, in the exuberance of his gratitude for the concession of legislative rights, spoke eloquently of the sincerity, the generosity, the magnanimity of Great Britain; declared that the repeal of the Act of 1719 was a measure of consummate wisdom and justice; and that there were no longer any constitutional questions between the two nations.[1] Flood was not disposed to be so enthusiastic. Jealous of Grattan's fame, and not unwilling to belittle his services, he saw no reason for gratitude, and maintained that the simple repeal of the Act of 1719 effected nothing. That Act was a declaratory law, and as such it did not change the law but only declared what it was; it was to secure the better dependence of Ireland, showing that she was already dependent. A repeal of such an Act was a repeal of the declaration, not of the legal principle; it was simply expunging the declaration of power to legislate from the English Statute Book; the right to legislate was dormant, but might at any time be revived unless it was now formally renounced; and it was a Renunciatory Act and not simple repeal which was required. He added, and with emphasis, that England still claimed the power to legislate externally for

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[1] *Irish Parliamentary Debates*, i. 356-7.

Ireland, that is, she still claimed supremacy over the whole field of marine and commercial legislation.[1] Flood's powers of exposition and reasoning were unsurpassed, and the case he made was undoubtedly strong, and yet in a House of 214 members only two others supported his views. Grattan's motion was passed with enthusiasm, and so angry did he feel that his work should be thus belittled that he moved: "That the legislature of Ireland was independent, and that any person who should propagate in writing or otherwise an opinion that any right whatever, whether external or internal, existed in any other Parliament, or could be revived, was an enemy to both kingdoms."[2] This motion, so subversive of free speech, was withdrawn and a milder one passed, though the sense of the House evidently was that the question should not even be discussed.

But if agitation of the question was thus ended in Parliament, discussion could not so easily be stifled beyond its walls. In the English House of Lords, Lord Abingdon reaffirmed the supremacy of the British Parliament in all matters of external legislation, and Mr. Fox was thought to favour the same view. In two Acts just passed in England, Ireland was expressly named, and therefore included; and appeals were still heard from Ireland in the English House of Lords, and in the English King's Bench by Lord Mansfield.[3] All these things generated doubts and suspicions of English good faith; the alarm spread to the Volunteers, and from the Volunteers to the people; Flood's views gained ground; outside Parliament his popularity rapidly rose as that of Grattan rapidly declined; and in 1783 the English Parliament itself took the matter in hands, and a Renunciation Act was passed "for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or may arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the Parliament and Courts of Ireland in matters of legislation and jurisdiction, and for preventing any writ of error, or appeal, from any of His Majesty's

[1] *Irish Parliamentary Debates*, i. 359-71, 406-10, 421, 460-62.

[2] *Irish Debates*, i. 466.

[3] *Grattan's Memoirs*, ii. 350-55; *Flood's Memoirs*, pp. 163-6.

Courts in that kingdom from being received, heard, and adjudged in any of His Majesty's Courts in Great Britain."[1]

In the preceding year Flood's position among the patriots in Parliament was one of isolation. Grattan had charge of the Mutiny Bill, and of the greater question of legislative rights; Yelverton of the repeal of Poyning's Act; Forbes of the independence of the judicature.[2] Since then the share taken by Flood in the debates on renunciation and simple repeal had placed him first in popular affection, and when a new question of popular rights arose it was in his hands the question was placed. This was Parliamentary reform. It had been taken up warmly by the Volunteers, first at Lisburn in July by delegates from forty-five companies, then at Dungannon in September by delegates from the Volunteer army of Ulster, after which the same question was considered at a National Convention at Dublin, composed of delegates from the whole Volunteer army of Ireland. The Convention was presided over by Lord Charlemont.[3] The delegates met at first in the Royal Exchange, after which they marched to the Rotunda. They were all Protestants, members of Parliament, peers, country gentlemen; some of lesser position and perhaps of extreme views, but the great majority men of moderate views and substantial position. Among them as delegate from Derry was a remarkable Englishman, Lord Hervey, Bishop of Derry, an English nobleman and an Irish Bishop, rich, generous, eccentric, of somewhat volatile disposition, the friend of the Catholics, the foe of the corrupt oligarchy who ruled the Parliament. Fond of show and splendour, he passed through the streets dressed in purple, with diamond knee and shoe buckles, his carriage drawn by six horses covered with purple cloth. His escort was a troop of dragoons under command of his nephew, George Robert Fitzgerald, who by education ought to have been a gentleman, but who in reality was a lawless ruffian, who swindled and cheated and swaggered and fought duels and terrorized his tenants and neighbours in Mayo, and who was ultimately hanged at Castlebar in 1786, and ought to have been hanged at a much earlier date.[1]

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[1] Plowden, ii. 20.

[2] *Grattan's Memoirs*, ii. 345-6.

[3] Plowden, ii. 28-42.

From the chairman to the humblest in the assembly every delegate knew that reform was urgently required. Of the 300 members of Parliament, 124 were nominated by 53 peers, 91 others by 52 commoners. There were but 6 voters in some boroughs, in others twice that number. These boroughs were openly sold by the landlord, a seat in Parliament costing £2000, the permanent patronage of a borough bringing as much as £8000. With 100 members of Parliament, either pensioners or placemen, entirely dependent on Government, and with 200 members returned by little more than 100 persons, and with the Catholics excluded both from Parliament and from the franchise, such a legislature was a mockery of representation.[2] In the Convention there was no lack of plans of reform, some crude, some extreme, some moderate, some practical. Lord Hervey strongly advocated the franchise for Catholics, but was strongly and successfully opposed by Charlemont and Flood. On that question both were narrow-minded and illiberal, and while willing to tolerate Catholics and protect their properties, they would grant them not the least measure of political power.[3] Under the influence of these two reaction and bigotry carried the day. A Reform Bill was agreed to, and Flood, by direction of the Convention, went with it straight to the House of Commons, dressed in the uniform of the Volunteers. His proposals were certainly not extreme. Only Protestants were to have votes, and even of Protestants only those who were resident for at least six months out of twelve and possessed a certain amount of freehold or leasehold property; the bounds of decayed boroughs were to be extended to the neighbouring districts; pensioners were to be ineligible for a seat in Parliament, and placemen under the Crown should vacate their seats and submit to re-election; and Parliament itself was to be elected triennially.[4]

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[1] Hardy's *Charlemont*, pp. 262-3; Lecky's *Ireland*, ii. 363-70.

[2] Plowden, ii. 57-64; Lecky, ii. 347-8.

[3] Lecky, ii. 371.

[4] *Ibid.* 372-3.

Had the Irish Government been anxious for Parliamentary reform; had the Volunteers and the patriots in Parliament acted together cordially; had the Catholics not been excluded; had Flood and Grattan co-operated, this measure and even a greater one could have been passed. But every one of these conditions was wanting. As the mouthpiece of the English Ministry, the Government did not want a reformed Parliament, but rather one dominated by pensioners and placemen, which would be submissive and compliant. A reformed Parliament, on the contrary, would be responsive to popular influences and less under Government control. Flood ought to have well known that such power as the borough-mongers possessed would not be surrendered except under pressure of some great national upheaval, or when the borough-mongers were menaced by an armed force, and yet he would rely only on Protestant support and fight only for Protestant rights. Even some of the patriot opposition had grown jealous of the power of the Volunteers, and resented dictation from an armed assembly, unmindful of the fact that it was the swords of the Volunteers rather than Grattan's eloquence that had won legislative independence. The exclusion of the Catholics from the plan of reform lost to the movement the impetus of national enthusiasm. Lastly, Grattan and Flood had become the bitterest enemies. The estrangement begun on the question of the Renunciation Act had ripened into open warfare. Grattan had voted for an increase in the army; Flood had angrily opposed it, and, calling Grattan a mendicant patriot, was answered in a speech of terrible power, told to his face that he had long been silent and silent for money, and that he was not an honest man.[1] In spite of these differences Grattan supported Flood's Bill, though not with enthusiasm; but Yelverton, who from being a patriot had become a placeman, led the opposition with great eloquence and skill. He would have no Bill which originated with the Volunteer Convention; let the Volunteers, whom he respected, return to their occupations, turn their swords into ploughshares, and leave the business of legislation in those hands where the law had placed it. The whole forces of reaction and corruption mustered to his call, and by 158 to 77 votes even leave to introduce the Bill was refused.[1] The Volunteer Convention was then quietly dissolved. Charlemont's advice was then taken—to hold county meetings and rely on speeches and resolutions and petitions, and the Bill was again introduced by Flood in March of the following year. It reached the second reading, but was then rejected by 159 to 85 votes.[2] A further motion made by Flood in the next year was negatived without a division; and so determined was the Government's opposition that the Sheriff of Dublin, for presiding at a reform meeting, was prosecuted and fined.[3] It was useless to agitate the question further, and Flood and his friends lost courage, concluding that with such influences at work the reform of such a Parliament was but a dream.

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, ii. 40-43.

While the Volunteers were holding meetings and passing resolutions, many other matters besides Parliamentary reform were debated and discussed in Parliament: the violence of the press, the outrages done to soldiers, the character of the recently formed Volunteer corps, many of whom were Catholic and poor, the distress among the people. Grattan attacked the excessive expenditure in the collection of the revenue,[4] but he also attacked the violence of the press, voted for the formation of a national militia, and described the Volunteers as having degenerated from being the armed property to being the armed beggary of Ireland.[5] Much also was said on questions of trade and commerce, on imports and exports, on bounties and protective tariffs. It was widely believed that nothing could effectually aid struggling industries and relieve the distress which prevailed but the imposition of protecting duties; and in April 1784 Gardiner moved that such duties be imposed.[6] He was opposed on the part of the Government by Foster, who claimed that his own corn law, passed a few months earlier, would meet the case. Its leading provisions were a bounty of 3s. 4d. on each barrel of exported corn until the price reached 27s., after which, until the price reached 30s., no import duty was put on British corn; and when the price went beyond 30s. no corn was to be exported, and all imported corn was to be admitted duty free.[1] The effect of the measure was considerable. Pasture-lands were broken up, sheep and cattle gave place to men, the rusty and silent mill-wheel was set in motion, population rapidly increased, and Ireland entered on a period of agricultural prosperity such as she had never known before.[2]

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, ii. 226-64.

[2] *Ibid.* iii. 43-85.

[3] *Ibid.* iv. 22-37, 372.

[4] *Ibid.* ii. 213.

[5] *Ibid.* iv. 41.

[6] *Ibid.* iii. 130.

But the imposition of tariffs remained still for settlement, and now the whole question of the commercial relations between Ireland and Great Britain was taken in hand. The position was peculiar. In all matters both of internal and external legislation the Irish Parliament was supreme, subject only to the necessity of having her Bills passed under the Great Seal of England. Sometimes, indeed, Irish Bills when sent to England were not returned, and to this extent a veto on her legislation could be imposed;[3] but to all intents and purposes the power of the Irish Parliament was equal and co-ordinate with that of Great Britain. With such power Ireland might have her consuls at foreign seaports and her envoys in foreign capitals; she might adopt a separate foreign policy and negotiate separate treaties; she might insist on being friendly where England was at enmity and on being at enmity with England's friend; she might refuse to follow England into war; she might refuse to contribute to her navy; and if she provoked hostility with some foreign power with whom England was at peace, who was to repel an invader from her soil? who was to guard her coasts? who was to defend her ships on the open sea? These possibilities of misunderstanding and conflict were foreseen in 1782 by the Duke of Portland. He had hoped by negotiation to have the Irish admit a distinction between what was imperial and what was local, to acknowledge the supremacy of the British Parliament in matters of trade and commerce, to induce them in return for the protection of their trade to contribute to the general support of the Empire. Lord Rockingham's hopes and wishes were similar.[1] But Grattan refused even to negotiate until legislative independence had been conceded.[2] The people, he thought, would not tolerate delay; the sympathy of the English Whigs might cool; English national pride and commercial jealousy might gather strength; the Irish patriot members might be corrupted, or disagreements and weakness might creep into their counsels.[3] For these reasons there was no negotiation. So far no conflict between the two nations had arisen; but the possibility of such remained, and the threat to impose protective duties showed that there was danger.

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, ii. 289-90.

[2] Lecky, ii. 383-91; Newenham, *The Population of Ireland*, pp. 46-50.

[3] Lecky, ii. 335-6.

In 1785 Mr. Pitt was Prime Minister of England and Mr. Orde was Chief Secretary for Ireland, and between these two, chiefly by Pitt, a scheme was elaborated, and being embodied in 11 resolutions was introduced into the Irish Parliament. They became known as Orde's Commercial Propositions. Based on reciprocity, they were to be a readjustment of the commercial relations between the two countries, their chief provisions being that the manufactures of each country were to be admitted into the other duty free, or at the same rate of duties if duties were imposed; and the same provision held for goods imported from the colonies or from abroad, which merely passed through one country to the other. Imports from one country were to be favoured in the other in preference to foreign goods, and so also were the imports from the British colonies. The restrictions of the Navigation Act were to cease. Bounties on native manufactures were to be discouraged, and if continued in one country were to be met by countervailing duties in the other. Finally, when the hereditary revenue exceeded £656,000, and when this sum

[1] *Charlemont Papers*, i. 90-92; *Grattan's Memoirs*, ii. 286-94 (Letter from Portland to Shelburne).

[2] *Grattan's Memoirs*, ii. 277.

[3] *Ibid.* 228-9.

was sufficient in times of peace for the expenses of government, the surplus was to go to the support of the British navy. Some other minor provisions there were which were not so clear, and which puzzled even some of the members. Grattan supported the whole Propositions; Flood, however, opposed them, without however going to a division, and the Propositions therefore passed, and with such cordial goodwill on the part of the members that new taxes to the amount of £140,000 were raised, so as to enable Ireland to meet her contribution under the scheme.[1]

Introduced into the British Parliament, the Resolutions had a stormier passage. The English manufacturers declared that if free trade with Ireland became a reality, Irish labour, which was cheap, would soon flood even the English markets with Irish goods, and as for the English foreign and colonial trade, its ruin would be certain. In deference to these complaints Pitt modified his scheme and expanded the 11 Resolutions to 20, the new ones being much less favourable to Ireland than the old. Ireland was now to be cut off from all share in the carrying trade of the Eastern seas, for the monopoly of the East India Company was to be maintained, and the vast expanse of water extending from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan would be interdicted to Irish ships. In the future she was to re-enact without change all navigation laws made by the British Parliament and all laws regulating foreign and colonial trade. Not so much perhaps for love of Ireland as to embarrass Mr. Pitt, Sheridan attacked the New Resolutions as a repeal of the Renunciation Act; and Fox described them as bartering English commerce for Irish slavery.[2] But in spite of this opposition they passed by large majorities, and, being thrown into the form of a Bill, were introduced in August into the Irish Parliament, where they were fiercely assailed. Flood and Grattan acted together, and both were at their best. They objected to the Bill because it would shut out Ireland from the East Indian trade; it would hamper her intercourse with the colonies and with foreign nations; if it was reciprocity, said Flood, it was a one-handed reciprocity; and Grattan denounced it as an attack on the constitution, as "an incipient and creeping union." Leave to bring in the Bill was carried only by 127 to 108 votes, a majority so small at such an early stage that the Bill was abandoned, and the last was heard of Orde's Commercial Propositions.[1]

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[1] *Irish Parliamentary Debates*, iv. 116-32, 172-209.

[2] Plowden, ii. 117-36; Lecky, ii. 448.

Less than two years later Mr. Orde again tried his hand at legislation. Irish education was then in a backward condition. The Act of 1537 directing that a school should be established in every parish was a dead letter. The Charter Schools were an acknowledged failure, and so also were the Erasmus Smith Schools. There were no technical schools, and the classical schools in the various dioceses were not efficient. Orde proposed a series of resolutions covering the whole field of education. The Act of 1537 was to be revived and put in force, and in each parish a school was to be maintained by the Protestant minister, supported by a tax on the minister's income and by a tax on the richer landlords of the parish. The funds of the Chartered and Erasmus Smith Schools were to be gradually diverted to maintain four provincial colleges in which technical education of a higher kind was to be imparted. There were to be twenty-two diocesan colleges where classics and the sciences were to be taught, and, fed by these diocesan colleges, were to be two great academies in which exhibitions and scholarships were to be founded for clever boys, and through which boys were to pass to the university. Finally, there was to be a second university, somewhere in Ulster. To this latter provision Hely Hutchinson took exception, declaring the sufficiency of Trinity College; and objection was also taken to the whole scheme, inasmuch as no provision was made for either Catholic or Presbyterian. Orde replied that they could go to all these schools and colleges—they were not specifically excluded; but, as the teachers were to be Protestant and were to teach

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[1] *Debates*, v. 330-443; Ashbourne's *Pitt*, pp. 116-48.

Protestantism, the exclusion of other denominations was sufficiently secured. The Resolutions passed in their entirety, and Orde hoped that early in the next session of 1788 he would embody these Resolutions in a Bill. But in the interval the Viceroy, the Duke of Rutland, died, and was succeeded by the Marquis of Buckingham, with whom Mr. Fitzherbert came over as Chief Secretary. Orde's term of office therefore expired before the session of 1788 had come, and his resolutions on education, like his resolutions on commerce and trade, never took legislative form.[1]

In the meantime there was a recrudescence of Whiteboyism in the Munster counties, and at last it became so serious that it attracted the attention of Parliament. An English traveller declared in 1775 that Whiteboy outrages came from excessive rents and excessive tithes, and now, eleven years later, the same thing was true.[2] It was said in Parliament, both by Mr. Longfield and by Mr. Curran, both of whom lived in Cork, that in that county at least the outrages had been much exaggerated;[3] but there is no doubt that disturbances had arisen and that crimes had been committed; that unlawful oaths were administered; that men had been dragged from their beds and carded, or buried in a hole lined with thorns; that in some cases men's ears had been cut off; and that threats and terrorism prevailed. A Parliament in sympathy with the people would have traced back these outrages to their proper causes and done something to allay discontent. But as long as Parliament was dominated by the Government, and the Government by its chief law-officer, John Fitzgibbon, it was safe to say that there might be repression, but there was little chance of remedial laws. In 1783, Yelverton from being Attorney-General became Chief-Baron, and Fitzgibbon stepped into his place. The grandson of a peasant, his sympathies were entirely aristocratic; the grandson of a Catholic, his hatred of Catholicity was extreme. His character, says Barrington, had no medium. A strong man, he trampled on the weak; of the highest capacity, he despised mediocrity; tyrannical, arbitrary, overbearing, he scorned to conciliate or to persuade; in the law courts he browbeat, he bullied, he insulted; in Parliament he was insolent, sarcastic, openly and brutally abusive; in the councils of Government he was autocratic and peremptory, and usually succeeded in bending others to his own imperious will. Indifferent to the applause or the censures of the people, he was absolutely without fear, championed freely what was unpopular, set his face like flint against all reform either in Church or State, took pensioners and placemen under his wing, defended every abuse, advocated every violence of authority or prerogative, embittered the masses of the people against the Government, and ultimately drove them to madness and to rebellion. To such a man the Whiteboy outrages were not a reason for curbing the tithe-farmer and the rack-renter, but for the passing of a Coercion Act. He admitted indeed that the people had much reason to complain; that in Munster, which he knew well, they were ground to powder by rack-renting landlords who exacted from their tenants as much as £6 an acre for their little holdings, and compelled them to pay rent by working for fivepence a day.[1] Yet his prescription for these ills was a Riot Act of savage severity, the chief provision of which was that if twelve or more persons assembled together, and being ordered by any magistrate to disperse failed to do so within an hour, they were each liable to the punishment of death. He proposed, further, that whenever oaths had been administered at any Catholic Church the building was to be levelled to the earth. Grattan described this clause as stabbing the criminal through the sides of his God, and the whole Bill as being written in blood. In deference to his objections Fitzgibbon omitted the clause, and limited the measure to three years, and with these limitations it passed in all its severity.[2]

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, vii. 489-511; Seward's *Collectanea Hibernica*, ii. 147-56.

[2] Twiss's *Tour*, pp. 142-3.

[3] *Debates*, vii. 23-30.

With outrages of any kind Grattan had no sympathy, and to the greater part of Fitzgibbon's Act he offered no serious opposition. But it is poor statesmanship to rely altogether on repression when there is question of admitted wrong; and in 1787 and the two following years Grattan frequently brought the question of tithes before Parliament. He studied the matter carefully and was complete master of his subject, and the picture he drew of oppression and misery was certainly dark. The exemption of grazing lands threw the whole burden of tithes on the poor, tithes of corn and cabbage and potatoes and turf, tithes that were often greater than the rent. On the tithe-farmer and tithe-proctor he was specially severe. The former was an extortioner by profession, who paid for the privilege of making a bad use of an unsettled claim; the latter was "a wretch who follows his own nature when he converts authority into corruption and law into peculation."[1] In some cases the crop was ruined waiting to be valued, in some cases overvalued. The proctor often levied 2s. in the £ for proctorage, or he got free labour, and if he had a shop it was woe to the farmer who refused to deal with him. From the Bible, from the fathers of the Church, from ancient and modern history, sacred and profane, Grattan drew his arguments; and he set them forth with such copiousness of knowledge, such mastery of detail, such wealth of imagery, and in such vivid and picturesque language, that the case he made was irresistible. But his labour was labour in vain. His motion for a commutation of tithes in 1787 and again in 1788 was rejected, as was his Bill to exempt flax and potatoes and barren lands.[2] He also attacked the Dublin Castle Act by which police were substituted for watchmen, with the result that matters had become worse; for under the watchmen the city had been robbed on cheaper terms.[3] And he supported Mr. Forbes in his oft-repeated attacks on the pension list.[4]

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[1] *Parliamentarv Debates*, vii. 58-59, 63.

[2] *Ibid.* 181-5.

In these contests we miss the name of Flood. Since 1783 he was a member of the English Parliament, and since 1785 had not appeared in the Parliament at Dublin. But he made

[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, vii. 341, viii. 195.

[2] *Ibid.* viii. 192, 445-60, ix. 442-64.

[3] *Ibid.* viii. 302.

[4] *Ibid.* vii. 320, viii. 68-69, 353-74.

no great impression in England, nothing commensurate with his great talents. In Grattan's fine phrase, he was an oak of the forest transplanted at fifty, too old, it would seem, to root itself in a foreign soil; and for the few years until his death in 1791 he was often silent on great questions, and at no time played a distinguished part. But if Flood's voice was silent at Dublin, another one was often raised in the ranks of reform, and by the side of Grattan and Forbes and others no voice was more eloquent than that of John Philpot Curran. He was one of the few men who had the courage to face Fitzgibbon, and to face him on equal terms. He had less knowledge of constitutional questions than Flood, and was less effective in Parliamentary debate, but, unlike Flood, he was the friend and even the champion of the Catholics. The sustained brilliance of Grattan was not his, but there are passages in his speeches not inferior to the finest of Grattan's, and it is probable that Grattan would have never won at the bar the position of Curran, who was perhaps the ablest advocate of his time. But neither the efforts of Forbes nor the genius of Grattan or Curran could make any impression on the corrupt ranks of the Government. The pension list grew until it reached the enormous total of £100,000 a year, and was, in Curran's words, a museum of curiosities.[1] New names were put on as old ones dropped off, additional offices were created, and peerages were openly and shamelessly sold;[2] and if there were promises of retrenchment made by the Government, as sometimes there were, these promises were not seriously given, and were not meant to be fulfilled.

It was during the Viceroyalty of Buckingham, in 1789, that George III. became insane. As his son, the Prince of Wales, was of age, it was on all hands agreed that he should be appointed regent, with the powers of the first estate of the realm. The Prime Minister, Pitt, wished to proceed by Bill, and wished also to limit the regent's power and patronage; while Fox, who was unpopular with the King but was the special favourite of the Prince, wished to proceed by address, simply asking the Prince to take upon himself the government of the kingdom during the King's illness, and unfettered by limitations or restrictions. The debates on the question in the English Parliament were long and able and acrimonious, and ultimately Pitt carried a series of resolutions, which he proceeded to embody in a Bill.[1] But the views of Fox were more popular in Ireland. Grattan thought that to proceed by address was more in keeping with the constitution of 1782. His sympathies were with Fox and the Whigs on public questions; he disliked Pitt, and thought that to proceed by Bill would be to take directions from England. The popular party shared his views; and some of the borough-mongers, believing that George III. would never recover, that Pitt would soon get his dismissal and Fox take his place, and that the Prince of Wales being regent, would be the source whence pensions and places would come, hastened to worship the rising sun. So formidable a combination was not to be resisted, and in spite of the threats of Buckingham and the very able case made by Fitzgibbon the Irish Parliament decided to proceed by address. The Viceroy refused to forward it, and delegates were sent from Parliament instead. They were cordially and gratefully received by the Prince; but by that time the King had recovered his reason, and with it his power.[2] Fox and his friends in England were in consequence depressed, as were Grattan's friends in Ireland; while Buckingham and Fitzgibbon were elated, and the time had come for rewarding friends and for punishing those who had deserted them in their hour of need. The great office of Lord Chancellor, then vacant, was given to Fitzgibbon, who was also made a peer; the placemen who had supported Grattan were dismissed; new places were created and new pensions; new peerages and baronetcies were conferred; the majority of Grattan in Parliament melted away; and when Buckingham resigned office, in the end of 1789, the Government was again strong and corruption was triumphant and uncontrolled.[3] This was the state of Ireland when, early in 1790, a new Viceroy, the Earl of Westmoreland, crossed from England.

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[1] *Curran's Speeches*, pp. 59-60.

[2] Seward, ii. 216, 220-21.

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[1] Plowden, ii. 208-27. [2] *Parliamentary Debates*, ix. 40, 72-84.

[3] Lecky, ii. 483-5; Seward, ii. 213-14; Plowden, ii. 279-80.

During these years nothing had been done for the Catholics. The Catholic Association founded by Curry, O'Connor, and Wyse had done its best, but its best was little. A purely Protestant Parliament thought it had been generous in passing the Acts of 1778 and 1782; and it is certain that the latter Act would have been much more liberal but for the opposition of Charlemont and Flood, still more perhaps on account of the objections raised by Fitzgibbon that to repeal the Penal Code would be to repeal the Act of Settlement.[1] The same influences were at work in the years that followed, and though Grattan was sympathetic nothing could be done. Nor did the Catholics make any serious effort to assert themselves. From time to time they merely presented addresses of loyalty and congratulation, suing humbly for concessions.[2] In the Catholic Committee Lord Kenmare was one of the leaders, but he was spiritless and incapable; and Dr. Troy, Archbishop of Dublin, another leader, was anxious above all not to irritate Dublin Castle, and though freely condemning the Whiteboys he had no words of condemnation for the tithe-farmer and the rack-renter.[3] It seemed useless to look to Parliament for redress. The Whig Club, formed by Grattan and others in 1789, wanted a limitation of places and pensions and Parliamentary reform, but, chiefly owing to Charlemont, it did not put Catholic Emancipation on its programme. The Chief Secretary refused when asked to take the question into consideration; even a Catholic petition would not be received in Parliament, nor a Catholic address at Dublin Castle.[4]

But great events were taking place on the Continent of Europe. The mighty upheaval called the French Revolution was in progress. A sorely oppressed people had at last turned on their oppressors. The noble's chateau and the King's palace were plundered with a will; the courtly abbé, who neglected his duties and often disgraced his office, had brought ruin on his Church and its ministers; the King was made responsible for evils which he inherited and did not create, and was unable to remedy; and altar and throne were overturned. On the ruins of both a French Republic had arisen, a republic which deified nature and reason, abolished all religious disabilities, declared such payments as tithes immoral, pronounced all men to have equal rights; and to every nation that was oppressed and wished to assert its freedom this new republic was ready to lend its aid. These novel doctrines had their effect in Ireland. The Volunteers were still strong in Ulster, and they heartily approved of the French Revolution, and demanded Parliamentary reform and Catholic enfranchisement; and the Society of United Irishmen, which was formed at Belfast in 1791, aimed at bringing about these reforms by bringing Catholic and Presbyterian together.[1] The Catholic Committee, tired of presenting petitions and addresses, adopted so bold and manly a tone that Lord Kenmare and sixty-eight others who wished to be friendly with the Castle seceded from its ranks.[2] It then passed under the guidance of Mr. Keogh, a Dublin merchant of ability, who, despairing of the Irish Parliament, had a deputation sent to England to lay their grievances at the foot of the throne. Large concessions had just been made to the English Catholics, and the English Ministry wished the Irish Parliament to be equally liberal. Even Burke, who hated the French Revolution with his whole soul, and by his writings had changed so many English reformers into reactionaries, favoured the cause of the Irish Catholics, and sent his son to Dublin to aid them. But the Irish bigots would not surrender a single inch of ground. Fitzgibbon in the Lords, and Foster, the Speaker, in the Commons were all-powerful, and were equally able and equally bigoted; the Viceroy and the Chief Secretary became the willing tools of these selfish bigots, and only after the strongest pressure from England was an Act passed in 1792 admitting Catholics to the bar, legalizing marriages between Catholics and Protestants, allowing masters more than one Catholic apprentice, and permitting Catholics to erect and endow Catholic schools.[1]

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, i. 307.

[2] Macnevin's *Pieces of Irish History*, p. 18.

[3] Lecky, ii. 403-404.

[4] *Ibid.* iii. 22-23.

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[1] Lecky, iii. 13-15.

[2] *Ibid.* 23-27.

Such grudging concessions were of little value, and even the most moderate Catholic could not accept them as a settlement of Catholic demands. A "Digest of the Popery Laws" made by Mr. Butler for the United Irish Society showed that the Catholics were still a degraded sect.[2] Feeling this themselves, the Catholic Committee had delegates selected from the different parishes in Ireland, and early in December a Catholic Convention commenced its sittings in Dublin.[3] The bigots called it derisively the Back Lane Parliament, and every effort was made to discredit its proceedings and to identify it with sedition. Fitzgibbon and Foster resumed their old tactics of stirring up opposition to all concession, and at Grand Jury meetings had resolutions passed denouncing the Catholics and exciting Protestant fears.[4] And the Dublin Corporation declared that Protestant ascendancy must be maintained, and this it defined to be—"a Protestant King of Ireland, a Protestant Parliament, a Protestant hierarchy, Protestant electors and government, the benches of justice, the army, and the revenue, through all their branches and details, Protestant; and this system supported by a connexion with the Protestant realm of England."[5] Neither Pitt nor Dundas, the Home Secretary, was unfriendly to Protestantism; but such undiluted ascendancy as this could not be maintained in an age when the cry for equality was so much abroad. The new French Republic had developed unexpected strength. The cannon of Kellerman had hurled back the Prussians at Valmy; Dumouriez at Gemappes had played equal havoc with the Austrians and laid Belgium at the feet of France; and soon after Louis XVI. was led to the guillotine, and France declared war on England. And meanwhile French principles were making headway in Ireland. The Ulster Volunteers celebrated the fall of the Bastile. A new armed body had arisen in Dublin—the

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[1] Lecky, iii. 40-42, 54-55; Plowden, ii. 351-64.

[2] Macnevin, pp. 122-40.

[3] Plowden, ii. 384.

[4] *Ibid.* 376-7.

[5] Macnevin, p. 29.

National Guards—the buttons of their uniforms with an Irish harp surmounted by a cap of liberty instead of a crown.[1] The relations between the United Irish Society and the Catholic Committee had become so friendly that Keogh became a United Irishman, while Wolfe Tone became Secretary to the Catholic Committee;[2] and when the latter body sent delegates to London to the King with a Catholic petition, they were welcomed on their way at Belfast with enthusiasm, and had their carriages drawn through the streets amid thunders of applause.[3] Pitt and Dundas thought it enough to have war on the Continent without also having rebellion in Ireland; and Fitzgibbon and his friends were told plainly that if rebellion broke out the intolerant claims of Protestant ascendancy would not be supported by English arms.[4] And then a strange thing happened. The Protestants, whom the Viceroy and the Chief Secretary had pictured as seething with discontent, determined to die rather than yield, quickly gave way; and a Bill was passed in February 1793 giving Catholics the Parliamentary and municipal franchise, and placing them in other respects on a level with Protestants, except that they were still excluded from the great offices of State and from the high judicial positions.[5] Fitzgibbon in the Lords made a bitter speech against the Bill, though he did not divide the House. He helped, however, to spoil the effect of the conciliatory measure by having an Act passed declaring the Catholic Convention illegal, as well as all such conventions which might be held in the future.[6]

Meantime the question of Parliamentary reform had been vehemently agitated. Grattan and the Duke of Leinster, in 1792, had founded a new association—The Friends of the Constitution—which, unlike the Whig Club, favoured complete Catholic Emancipation as well as Parliamentary reform.[7] Year after year, in speeches of wonderful power, Grattan

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[1] Plowden, ii. 381-4.

[2] Lecky, iii. 108.

[3] Plowden, ii. 388.

[4] Lecky, iii. 127-9, 134.

[5] *Ibid.* ii. 141-2; Plowden, ii. 421-6 (copy of the Act).

[6] Plowden, ii. 429-30.

[7] Lecky, iii. 122-3, 147-8.

HENRY GRATTAN

brought the latter question before Parliament. He had succeeded, indeed, in having an Act passed compelling pensioners during pleasure and a large number of placemen to vacate their seats when they accepted these pensions or places. An Act was also passed limiting pensions; and the hereditary revenue, like all other portions of the National finances, was made subject to Parliamentary control. In addition to these measures the poorer cabins were exempted from the hearth money, and the *regium donum* was increased; this latter measure, no doubt, being intended to wean the Presbyterian clergy from French opinions. But nothing could induce the majority in Parliament to abolish the rotten boroughs. Fitzgibbon and his friends repelled with vigour every assault on the sacred citadel of monopoly, and though Grattan was supported by Ponsonby and Parsons, and with great ability, he was in every instance outvoted; and in the session of 1794 Ponsonby's Reform Bill was defeated by more than three to one, showing that the question had receded rather than advanced.[1] And meantime England was at war with France; the Catholics, being still excluded from Parliament, were dissatisfied; outrages were common in Ulster; disaffection was everywhere among the Ulster Presbyterians, and had already made some progress in the ranks of the Catholics.

At this date an important section of the English Whigs went over to Pitt and were given office. The Duke of Portland became Home Secretary, having Irish affairs in his department, and Lord Fitzwilliam became Lord-Lieutenant, and came over in the first days of January 1795. What followed became afterwards the subject of much debate and has never been satisfactorily explained. It is certain that both Portland and Fitzwilliam understood the acceptance of office to mean a change in the policy of the Irish Government. It is certain that they were the special friends of Grattan and Ponsonby, and that these two came to London to consult with Fitzwilliam, urging the retirement on pension of Fitzgibbon as the first step towards any measure of reform. It is certain that this was mentioned by Fitzwilliam to Pitt, and that at first he did not object, though afterwards he did. It is certain that the English Ministry desired Fitzwilliam, on coming to Ireland, not to advocate Catholic Emancipation; but if he could not prevent the question being agitated he was to support it. It is certain that no mention was made of the matter in the speech with which Parliament was opened, but that, nevertheless, the tide of Catholic agitation ran so high that it was useless to try and roll it back; and therefore when Grattan introduced a Bill into Parliament the Viceroy determined to support it. It is certain that he so informed his colleagues, Pitt and Portland, and that neither raised any objection. Then when Catholic expectation was at its highest they interfered, and Fitzwilliam was recalled. Why he was allowed to go so far and then was recalled has never been made clear. It may be because he dismissed from office a rapacious office-holder named Beresford, who had influence in England, and especially with Pitt. It may be that the great Minister was influenced by the King himself, to whom Fitzgibbon had already pointed out that to allow Catholics to sit in Parliament would be to violate his coronation oath. At all events, it is certain that the King requested Pitt to recall Fitzwilliam. It may be also that Pitt changed his mind, and, already meditating a union, was averse to Catholic concession. It is most likely that Fitzwilliam managed the question badly, and that had he proceeded more cautiously he might have succeeded. But after all this is said Pitt stands condemned, and the special pleading of Lord Rosebery on his behalf will not avail.[1] Certainly the difficulties did not come from the Irish Protestants. Outside of the corrupt junta in Parliament they were everywhere in favour of Catholic Emancipation, and Fitzgibbon himself admitted that Grattan's Bill would have been carried in Parliament.[2]

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[1] *Parliamentarv Debates*, xiv. 62, 74-77, 100-104, 108.

It was an unfortunate episode. It brought consternation into the Catholic ranks, and filled all with forebodings of coming ill. When Fitzwilliam left for England in March his carriage was drawn by the people to the water's edge; the

[1] Rosebery's *Pitt.*

[2] Plowden, ii. 466-500.

shops were closed as on a day of general mourning; a period of hope was over, to be succeeded by a period of discontent and despair.[1]

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[1] Plowden, ii. 503-11; Lecky, iii. 238-324; Ashbourne's *Pitt*, vi.; *Beresford's Correspondence*, ii. 51, 57. Beresford appealed to Auckland, who appealed to Pitt on his behalf. Fitzwilliam had dismissed him because he thought that no Viceroy could tolerate a man with such power. "He had made a Lord Chancellor, a Lord Chief-Justice, an Attorney-General, a Commander-in-Chief, and nearly a Primate." He was at the head of the revenue, the law, the army, and much of the Church.

CHAPTER II

The United Irishmen

THE elation produced throughout Ireland by the concession of legislative independence was soon followed by dejection and discontent in the minds of large masses of the people. The constitution which so often received the highest encomiums of Grattan and his friends was, after all, but a poor copy of that of England. It contained, for instance, no provision by which a change of policy would involve a change of Government; and it was noted by the people with displeasure that those who had vehemently opposed all popular concessions were continued in office. The unrepresentative character of the Irish Parliament remained, and after 1782, as before it, a few great families dominated both Houses, and could defeat any popular measure when they pleased, that is, when for selfish motives they coalesced. The rejection of Flood's Reform Bill disgusted the Protestant reformers. The insults flung at the Volunteers both by Parliament and Government deepened their disgust. The refusal to impose protective tariffs disappointed many; and it was some time before the beneficial effects of Foster's corn law appeared, and meantime the agricultural interest complained. The maintenance of a bloated pension list and the continued creation of sinecure offices disgusted all. Dublin complained of inefficient watchmen, and though the police system which succeeded was more expensive to maintain, life and property were not on that account made more secure. In the years 1783 and 1784 the worst relations existed between the soldiers and the citizens. The soldiers when called upon to suppress disturbance were unduly harsh; the Dublin butchers retaliated by houghing soldiers, when a chance of doing so offered; and a special Act of Parliament had to be passed making these crimes a capital offence. Dublin merchants importing English goods, and Dublin artisans working for low wages, were sometimes tarred and feathered by their fellows, and when a man guilty of inflicting this indignity was being flogged through the streets, the mob violently interfered and were fired on by the soldiers, one man being killed and several wounded.[1] These outrages, however, were confined to Dublin, and soon disappeared, though, no doubt, much of the discontent remained. The crimes of the Whiteboys in Munster, two years later, were also put down by the savage Riot Act of Fitzgibbon, and in the middle of 1787 the Duke of Rutland declared that all Munster was peaceable except Cork, which remained partially disturbed.[2]

In the meantime disturbances had arisen in Ulster. In 1785 two Armagh Presbyterians had a quarrel, and a Catholic bystander took sides with one, enabling him to overcome his opponent. The defeated party vowed vengeance against that Catholic and all Catholics, and was soon able to stir up his co-religionists against them. Religious factions were thus set in motion. The Presbyterians insisted in having the law enforced which denied a Catholic the use of arms, and banding themselves together under the name of Peep-of-Day Boys, they appeared at break of day at the houses of the Catholics and forcibly took away any arms the Catholics possessed. Resenting these indignities, the Catholics joined together under the name of Defenders. The Volunteers, being for the most part Presbyterian, joined the Peep-of-Day Boys, and some newly-formed Volunteer corps refused to admit any Catholics into their ranks. Armed conflicts soon followed in which sometimes as many as one thousand men were engaged on each side, and in which blood was freely shed. Gradually the area of conflict extended. By the year 1788 the whole county of Armagh was agitated by these feuds, and in the years that followed similar disturbances arose in the adjacent counties, until all Ulster was torn with strife and discord.[3]

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[1] Plowden, ii. 79-80; Lecky, ii. 392-3.

[2] Lecky, ii. 463.

[3] Plowden, ii. 200-202.

In the beginning, at all events, the Defenders were not the aggressors, and the obvious duty of the Government was to restrain the Peep-of-Day Boys, while at the same time carrying out the law as to the use of arms among their opponents. But this duty was not discharged. The Defenders became an organized and oath-bound society, and being almost wholly illiterate, they were without intelligent leaders who might keep them under control. Ceasing to be on the defensive, they sometimes became the aggressors, and when two troops of soldiers were sent to Armagh, in 1790, to put them down, they offered armed resistance, and fifty of the soldiers were killed.[1] The fact was that the Irish Government did not want these disturbances ended. If Catholics and Dissenters were united the demand for reform might become urgent, and the demand of a united people could not easily be denied. But while factions continued, a corrupt Parliament and a corrupt Government went on their way unchecked. As for the efforts at reform of the Whig Club, and of its more liberal successor the Friends of the Constitution, they were treated by Fitzgibbon and his friends with disdain.[2]

But in 1791 a Society was founded in Belfast which filled the Government with greater alarm. In that city democratic principles had long been fostered. Presbyterian in religion, republican in spirit, its sympathies had been with the revolted American colonies, and not a few from Belfast had fought for American freedom. In that city the first Volunteer Association was formed to protect the country against invasion, these associations being subsequently used to win commercial and legislative independence. Belfast had been urgent for Parliamentary reform, and at the Volunteer Convention of 1783 the Belfast delegates demanded Catholic Emancipation as well as Parliamentary reform.[3] Nowhere else had events in France been followed with keener satisfaction; and in 1791 Belfast celebrated the fall of the Bastile with enthusiasm, with speeches and addresses and resolutions with eulogies on Washington and Tom Paine and the Rights of Man.[1] Since the beginning of 1790 there was a branch of the Whig Club in the city of which Charlemont and Mr. Robert Stewart (Lord Castlereagh) were members; but its demand for further freedom for non-Catholics, which it would deny to Catholics, was felt to be little in harmony with the spirit of the time. There were many who wished to go further, and one of the most respected of the citizens, a woollen draper named Samuel Neilson, founded a small society in the summer of 1791 which was intended to bring together all classes and creeds. "Our efforts for reform," he said, "have been hitherto ineffective, and they deserved to be so, for they have been selfish and unjust, as not including the rights of the Catholics in the claims we put forward for ourselves."[2]

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[1] Plowden's *Historical Review*, ii. 275-7.

[2] *Ibid.* 386-7.

[3] Madden, i. 114.

It was at this date that Theobald Wolfe Tone first appeared on the stage of Irish politics. He was then twenty-eight years of age, born in Dublin, educated at Trinity College, and called to the Bar in 1789. His talents were considerable. But he was lazy, and though he read much, he studied little; he was restless, daring, adventurous, and at one time, and this after he was married, he had seriously proposed to establish a colony on one of the South Sea Islands, at another time to enlist as a soldier in the service of the East India Company. Having no taste for the law, he turned his attention to politics, and in 1790 wrote a pamphlet in defence of the Whig Club, which the Belfast Society so much valued that they brought out a large edition at their own expense.[3] Among Tone's many friends there was none to whom he was so much attached as Thomas Russell, at one time in the service of the East India Company, but in 1791 a captain in the 64th Regiment, then stationed at Belfast. Like Tone, Russell was a patriot and a democrat, and, resigning his commission, became a member of the Whig Club and of the Volunteer Association. Knowing that the latter body favoured the Catholics and wished to pass a declaration in their favour, but were unable to agree as to its terms, he asked Tone to draw up a suitable declaration. This was done. Nor was this the only product of Tone's pen in 1791, for in September of that year he published *An Argument in Favour of the Catholics of Ireland* over the signature of "A Northern Whig." He wrote with contempt of the Revolution of 1782, pointing out that three-fourths of the people were still without a vestige of political rights, that nothing but the strenuous efforts of the whole nation could purify Parliament, and that no such effort could be made until all sects acted together. His arguments were put with such force that Dissenters and Catholics were equally impressed, and not less than 10,000 copies of the pamphlet were sold.[1] By the Catholic Committee he was entertained at a public dinner, and in October he was invited, through Russell, to Belfast, and there founded the Society of United Irishmen. Then he returned to Dublin, where a branch of the new society was also formed.

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[1] Lecky, iii. 9-10; *Pieces of Irish History*, p. 9.

[2] Madden, iv. 4-5.

[3] Wolfe Tone's *Autobiography*, i. 16-24.

Tone himself was already convinced "that the influence of England was the radical vice in Irish government, and that Ireland would never be free, prosperous or happy until she was independent, and that independence was unattainable while the connexion with England lasted." The Whig Club he regarded with contempt; the Protestants he despaired of; his hope was in the Dissenters and the Catholics.[2] In founding the United Irish Society he stated with clearness what were his objects and what the means to be employed. "To subvert the tyranny of an execrable Government, to break the connection with England—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant and Catholic and Dissenter—these were my means."[3] Neilson and Russell, and perhaps a few others, shared his views about separation, but the Society as a body did not go so far. They declared in the first of three resolutions, that the weight of English influence in Irish government was so great that nothing but a cordial union among all the people of Ireland could act as an effective counterpoise; by the second resolution, that a radical reform was required; and by the third, that no reform would be practicable which did not include Irishmen of every religious persuasion. There is here no demand for separation. Indeed, the great Convention at Dungannon, in 1793, emphatically expressed its attachment to the British connexion and its antipathy to a republican form of government;[1] and if Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, as well as the abolition of tithes, had been granted, the United Irishmen, with few exceptions, would have been satisfied that their work was done.[2]

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[1] Lecky, iii. 10-13.

[2] Tone's *Autobiography*, i. 26.

[3] Tone, i. 50-51.

Though Catholics were free to enter the new Society, it does not appear that they did so in Belfast, where the members were usually Dissenters and of the middle class—clergymen, doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants and manufacturers.[3] In Dublin the chairman of the first branch established was the Hon. Simon Butler, a barrister and brother of Lord Mountgarrett; the secretary was Napper Tandy, a merchant. Among the members were Hamilton Rowan, a man of good family and a graduate of Cambridge; and Dr. Drennan, the Tyrtaeus of the Society, a poet whose verses were full of feeling and fire. Keogh and many of the Catholics also joined.[4] Outside of Dublin, however, the Catholics held aloof, and Neilson, in the end of 1792, complained that more of them had not joined in the south and west.[5] Nor did many of the Dissenters join outside Belfast, and the Defenders and Peep-of-Day Boys continued their quarrels in spite of the personal appeals made to both sides by Tone and Neilson and Keogh.[6] Yet religious animosities were being softened down. Neilson and his friends had established the *Northern*

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[1] Madden, iv. 4-8, 18.

[2] *Pieces of Irish History*, pp. 12-15.

[3] Madden, iv. 4-8.

[4] Tone, i. 54-58; Lecky, iii. 13-15, 23, 26.

[5] Madden, iv. 96-97.

[6] Tone, i. 104-106.

Star at Belfast for the express purpose of furthering the interests of the Society, and it constantly preached unity and peace, and not always without success.[1] The Protestant Tone became the paid secretary of the Catholic Committee; the Catholic delegates on their way to London were fêted and cheered by the Dissenters at Belfast; and in 1792, for the first time, the Dublin Volunteers, fearful of offending their Catholic brethren, refused to parade as usual round the statue of King William.[2] These were infallible signs that the people were becoming united; and now this united people demanded a drastic Reform Bill, the chief features of which were single-member constituencies, manhood suffrage, abolition of the property qualification for Parliament, payment of members, and annual Parliaments. The Government became alarmed; but its alarm increased when it was ascertained that arming and drilling was going on at Belfast, and that the Defenders were becoming a political body, demanding relief from taxes and rents and tithes.[3]

At no time had Grattan any sympathy with advanced measures of reform, and his hatred of the French Revolution was little less than that of Burke. He was against universal suffrage, against the continued existence of the Volunteers, against the United Irish Society, and in favour of the war with France, which the United Irishmen vehemently denounced.[4] What he wanted was moderate Parliamentary reform, the concession of full civil rights to the Catholics, a limitation of pensions and places, a Parliament representing the people, and an executive responsible to Parliament; and for these measures he pleaded, year after year, with extraordinary eloquence. But he was a voice crying in the wilderness. The Government, supported by a corrupt majority, would have repression rather than reform, and accordingly a proclamation was issued in 1793 against unlawful assemblies. Directly, it struck at newly-formed associations, but it was as much intended against the Volunteers, as was also the Convention Act prohibiting public meetings of any kind for the redress of grievances; and the Gunpowder Act, which prohibited the importation of arms and gunpowder without a licence.[1] The army was augmented to 20,000 men; an Act was also passed for the embodying of 16,000 militia; and the compulsory enlistment for the latter roused the bitterest feelings among the people.[2] About the same time four troops of dragoons entered Belfast, pulled down patriotic emblems, and attacked all who were in the streets, wounding many and terrorizing all. They were restrained from further acts of violence by the presence of 700 Volunteers, who assembled to protect the lives and properties of the citizens—conduct which was so resented by Government, that every assembly of Volunteers was henceforth declared to be unlawful and was to be dispersed by force.[3] Napper Tandy, for having adversely criticized a speech of the Solicitor-General's in Parliament, was declared guilty of a breach of privilege.[4] He fled to America, however, as it was known that he had taken the Defender oath, and this was a treasonable offence. The same year Butler and Bond were fined and imprisoned for declaring that a Committee of the House of Lords had acted illegally. The next year a meeting of the United Irish Society was broken up and had their papers seized; and Hamilton Rowan was prosecuted for seditious libel because he had, two years before, distributed an address of the United Irishmen to the Volunteers. In spite of Curran's speech in his defence—one of the finest ever delivered at the Bar—he was convicted and fined £500, as well as sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He managed, however, to escape from prison and reached France, though a reward of £1000 was offered for his recapture.[5]

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[1] Tone, i. 71.

[2] Lecky, iii. 105.

[3] Plowden, ii. 397; Lecky, iii. 196-7.

[4] Plowden, ii. 458-60; Lecky, iii. 93.

Nor did Fitzgibbon and his friends favour any concessions to the Catholics. They consented to the Act of 1793 only under pressure from Pitt and Dundas; but at the same time they struck at the Catholics by passing the Convention Act; and they prohibited any of that creed from becoming officers in the newly-formed Militia.[1] They obstinately refused to allow Catholics to enter Parliament; and it was their intrigues which led to the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. It is probable, as Mr. Lecky thinks, that they hoped the concessions to the Catholics would breed dissensions between them and the Dissenters; and as the enfranchisement of so many forty-shilling freeholders would throw the representation of the counties into Catholic hands, the Presbyterians on their side would wish for the continuance of the rotten boroughs as the most effective counterpoise to Catholic predominance. These hopes were not realized, for Catholic and Dissenter remained united, and continued to work together for reform. But with the recall of Fitzwilliam and the coming over of Lord Camden (1795) as Viceroy, all hope of reform was over, and all thinking men who loved Ireland looked to the future with dread.

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[1] Plowden, ii. 427-9.

[2] Lecky, iii. 216-17.

[3] *Pieces of Irish History*, pp. 55-59.

[4] Tone, i. 54.

[5] Madden, i. 248-50, 260, 262, ii. 184-98.

In the preceding year the Catholic Bishops had sent a memorial to the Viceroy asking for the necessary licence to establish seminaries for the education of priests, the colleges on the Continent being no longer available owing to the progress of the French Revolution. Not a few of the Bishops, as well as Dr. Troy, were outspoken in their loyalty,[2] and the Government regarded the proposal with a favourable eye. By some, and these not unfavourable to the Catholics, it was suggested that Trinity College should give the necessary facilities; but to this the Bishops objected that a public university was unsuited for the education of priests, who should be trained to habits of austere discipline, and were to be ministers of a "very ritual religion." Grattan, acting as the mouthpiece of some Catholics, would prefer to have Catholics and Protestants educated together;[3] but this was considered impracticable in the case of priests. Edmond Burke, who had been consulted, held an opposite opinion to that of Grattan.

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[1] Plowden, ii. 435.

[2] *Ibid.* 443-5.

[3] *Parliamentary Debates*, xv. 201-203.

To educate priests at Trinity College, he thought, would be absurd ; and he warned the Bishops also not to have clerical education under Government control, and above all not under the control of such men as Fitzgibbon. In London the interests of the Bishops were looked after by the chaplain at the Spanish Embassy, Dr. Hussey, an Irish priest of great ability, the friend of Dr. Johnson, the very special friend of Burke ; and it was in letters to Hussey that Burke gave expression to his views. Dr. Hussey was able also to obtain the support of the Duke of Portland ; and when Fitzwilliam was coming to Ireland he was instructed to have provision made for the education of the Catholic parochial clergy. His early and unexpected recall prevented him from giving legislative effect to these instructions, but the Bill for founding a Catholic College was drafted when he left Ireland. It was introduced under Lord Camden and soon passed into law.[1] In its final shape the measure provided for separate Catholic teaching, and for supervision by a Board of Trustees, among whom were Fitzgibbon and three other Protestants. All the others, seventeen in number, were Catholics, and of these ten were Bishops. A sum of £8000 was voted for building and initial equipment, and a site was obtained from the Duke of Leinster at Maynooth, a most unfortunate selection when more healthy sites could have been obtained. Buildings were then erected, Dr. Hussey became President, professors were appointed, students went into residence, and a college which has become one of the greatest Catholic colleges in the world was started on its way.[2]

It was part of Camden's instructions to make some provision for the Catholic parochial clergy, and to put the lower order of Catholics on a level with those of other persuasions in the matter of primary education. But he was either unable or unwilling to attend to these questions, and in his time nothing was done. To Catholic Emancipation he was instructed to give every opposition, and he was also to stir up an anti-Catholic feeling, and to organize an Irish party of resistance.[1] That he had no difficulty in doing this in Parliament was soon manifested in the debates on Grattan's Catholic Relief Bill. Bigotry, self-interest and corruption were all on one side; on the other were patriotism and statesmanship; and the speeches of Grattan and Parsons, of Knox and Arthur O'Connor, were marked by great eloquence and power. These gentlemen could point to the fact that the Catholics from every city and county in Ireland had petitioned for the measure; that the Protestants had not petitioned against it; and Grattan was able to say with truth that, except from the corporation of Dublin, not a single protest had come from city or county, from grand jury or corporation. In solemn tones Parsons warned the House of the danger of first exciting hopes and then, violently and without reason, dashing these hopes to the ground; and Knox told the Government that the choice was, either to pass the Bill or to re-enact the penal laws and risk a rebellion.[2] In 1794 Pitt and Dundas declared that they were not going to risk a rebellion on so small a question, but in 1795 they had changed their minds.[3] The servile majority in Parliament who were ready to support Fitzwilliam were now ready to follow Camden in the opposite direction, and the Bill was thrown out by 155 votes to 84.[4] When Fitzwilliam left Ireland he was mourned as a friend, but when Camden came he was hailed as an enemy. The day of his arrival he was hissed through the streets, the military had to be called out as riots were feared, the houses of Fitzgibbon and the Speaker were attacked, and the former as he passed through the streets was struck with a stone.[5] Popular feeling became still more embittered when Fitzgibbon was advanced in the peerage, with the title of Earl of Clare; and when the Catholic Relief Bill was rejected, the Catholics turned away with disgust from the doors of Parliament. To that assembly it was useless to make further appeal. Many of them at once joined the United Irishmen, disaffection rapidly spread, and in secret societies and in violence that redress was sought which constitutional effort alone should have obtained.

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, xv. 404.

[2] Plowden, ii. 447-8 ; Healy's *History of Maynooth College*, pp. 99-127, 163-4.

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[1] Lecky, iii. 328.

[2] *Parliamentary Debates*, xv. 28-57, 255-6, 338.

[3] Plowden, ii. 471.

[4] *Debates*, xv. 361.

[5] Plowden, ii. 531-2.

The Defenders became especially active. From Armagh they had now extended to the other counties of Ulster to Meath, Westmeath and Kildare in Leinster ; and in Connaught they were numerous and aggressive. Like the Whiteboys they aimed at lowering rents and tithes and raising the wages of labourers, and they sought to effect their objects by secret organization and crime. They compelled servants to quit the service of masters who were obnoxious, intimidated magistrates, witnesses and jurors, endeavoured to seduce the Militia from their allegiance, houghed cattle, burned houses, made midnight raids for arms, compelled smiths to make pikes and spears. In one case they openly attacked a party of soldiers, but were driven off with the loss of fifty of their number.[1] Placed in command of the military in Connaught, Lord Carhampton undertook to put down outrages, and under his directions 1000 persons were taken up and sent to the fleet. They had not been convicted of any crime. Some of them were in prison awaiting trial, some had neither been imprisoned nor accused. Loudly asserting their innocence, they begged hard for a trial, but they begged in vain. On mere suspicion of being Defenders they were torn from their families, and amid protestations and entreaties and the wailing of women they were forcibly sent on board ship. By these illegal measures Carhampton struck terror, but he also generated discontent and bitterness which long endured.[2]

In Armagh the Defenders and Peep-of-Day Boys continued quarrelling, and in September 1795 they fought a pitched battle at a place called The Diamond, in which the Defenders were beaten with heavy loss. The victors then formed themselves into a new association called the Orange Society, which rapidly spread throughout Ulster, absorbing all that was intolerant and even fanatic among the Protestant and Presbyterian inhabitants. The memory of William of Orange they regarded with special reverence. On the other hand, they regarded all Catholics with special abhorrence, and seem to have taken an oath to exterminate those in their midst.[1] They compelled masters to dismiss Catholic servants, landlords to evict Catholic tenants, burned the houses of Catholics, destroyed their property, in many cases sacrificed their lives. They posted up notices warning the Catholics to leave the province by a certain date—to go to Hell or Connaught. In this way the Armagh weaver was driven from his loom and the farmer from his land, and to such an extent that from that one county more than 700 families were sent adrift. Some went to Connaught, all were houseless and homeless, nor had they been guilty of any crime except to have professed the Catholic faith. Grattan in Parliament denounced these Orange outrages and the magistrates who stood idly by while inoffensive Catholics were being robbed and driven from their homes, and sometimes murdered by lawless bands. But the Castle party would do nothing. In the Orangemen they recognized the anti-Catholic faction which Camden had been directed to encourage, and such a faction they would not restrain, still less would they compensate the Catholics who had been despoiled. On the other hand, an Act of Indemnity was passed in the session of 1796, which indemnified Carhampton and the magistrates who had acted under him for their illegal acts against the Catholic peasants of Connaught. In the same session an Insurrection Act was passed, giving magistrates power to declare any district disturbed, and as such placing it under martial law. Magistrates might also search for arms at any hour, day or night; they might send before the judge of assize any one found out after dark, and the judge might send him to the fleet; and the magistrates might also search houses at night and send those who were absent from home without cause to the fleet.[2]

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, xvi. 43, 49, 102-9.

[2] Lecky, ii. 419-20.

[1] Plowden, ii. 536-7.

[2] *Parliamentary Debates*, xvi. 103-7.

One effect of these measures was that the United Irishmen rapidly increased in numbers. Many of the Catholics joined after the recall of Fitzwilliam, many in consequence of the severities of Carhampton, many more after the passage of the Insurrection and Indemnity Acts, but most of all because of the Orange outrages; and it was noted that in Catholic counties, whenever an Orange lodge was set up, the Catholics hastened to join the United Irishmen. From Parliament they had nothing to expect but repressive laws, from the Orangemen nothing but robbery and murder, and hence they sought the protection of a powerful organization. By the end of 1796, if the Peep-of-Day Boys had been turned into Orangemen, the Defenders had become United Irishmen, and to such an extent that long before the Rebellion broke out the United Irish Society had 500,000 men enrolled.[1] Its meetings having been broken up in 1794, it was organized early in the following year as a secret society, its declared object being "a full representation of all the people of Ireland." This was an elastic phrase which did not exclude Parliamentary action, but which was soon understood by the vast majority of members to contemplate a revolution and a republic. The civil organization of the society was made up of a number of committees, the baronial committees being composed of delegates from the various societies, the county committees of delegates from the baronial committees, the provincial committees of delegates from the county committees, and the national committee of delegates from the provincial bodies. The military organization was on similar lines. The secretary of each society of twelve members was appointed a non-commissioned officer; the members of baronial committees, each delegated from five societies, was a captain; the delegates from baronial committees to the county committees were colonels; all officers above that rank were appointed by the National Directory. Both the civil and military organizations were perfected by the end of 1796, and by that time Arthur O'Connor, Macnevin and Addis Emmet had joined the society and held prominent positions, as did also the son of the Duke of Leinster, Lord Edward FitzGerald.[1]

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[1] *Pieces of Irish History*, pp. 178, 181.

Tone had left Ireland in the previous year. The French Government had sent, in 1794, an agent to England and Ireland, to ascertain if a party could be found in either or both countries to favour a French invasion. This agent was a Protestant clergyman, the Rev. William Jackson, an Englishman of Irish descent who had lived for some years in Paris, where he had imbibed revolutionary principles and formed friendly relations with the revolutionary authorities. Arrived in London, he foolishly confided in an old friend of his, a solicitor named Cockayne, who at once gave secret information to Mr. Pitt. The latter bade Cockayne accompany Jackson to Ireland, to watch his movements and obtain incriminating evidence against him. These orders were faithfully carried out. Jackson was arrested and charged with high treason, and on the evidence of Cockayne, who turned informer, he was found guilty and sentenced to death in April 1795. He managed, however, to get some poison and took it, and while awaiting sentence in the dock he fell dead.[2] Tone had met with Jackson and Cockayne, and had been asked by Jackson to go on a mission to France from the United Irishmen. He was, however, wary and suspicious, and refused, though he drew up a paper describing the various parties in Ireland, and dwelt on the likelihood of a French invading force getting support. In all this there was not sufficient material to send him like Jackson to the dock and to the scaffold. But he had been treading on dangerous ground, and having become a marked man he resolved, if he could do so, to leave the country. Through the influence of powerful friends, he was allowed by the Government to leave for America, and leaving Ireland in June, arrived at Philadelphia in August.

Before leaving Dublin his friends Addis Emmet and Russell urged him to seek for French aid for Ireland; and at Belfast, on the Cave Hill outside the city, he and Russell, with Neilson and MacCracken, all prominent United Irishmen, swore never to desist in their efforts until they had subverted English authority in Ireland.[1] Hamilton Rowan and Napper Tandy, whom he met in America, fully shared these views; and Tone, with letters of introduction from the French consul at Philadelphia, set sail from Sandy Hook on the 1st of January 1796, and reached Paris in February. In the French capital he had many interviews with the Foreign Minister De la Croix, with Carnot, and with General Hoche, and greatly impressed them with his ability and sincerity. Ultimately he was assured that an expedition would be sent to Ireland; preparations were at once made; and finally, after delays which to Tone seemed interminable, the expedition was ready to set sail from Brest on the 15th of December. Hoche was general-in-chief, Grouchy second in command, Hardy and Humbert were among the generals. Tone himself was *chef de brigade*. The whole force, borne in 43 vessels, was 15,000; arms, ammunition, heavy guns were in abundance; the soldiers had seen service and might be relied on; and as for Hoche, his talents were scarcely inferior to those of Bonaparte. If such a force under such a commander could have landed in Ireland it would have spelled ruin for British domination.

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 519-20; Lecky, iii. 486-7; Moore's *Life of Lord Edward FitzGerald*; *Report of Secret Committee of House of Commons.*

[2] Tone, i. 203-9.

Though an English squadron was outside the harbour, engaged in the work of observation, the expedition never encountered an English vessel.[2] In this it was fortunate, but in every other respect it had ill-luck. In passing out to sea through the narrow channel called the Raz, one vessel struck a rock and went down with all hands. A dense fog was succeeded by a dead calm, during which the sails flapped lazily and no progress was made. In the fog the Admiral's vessel with Hoche on board became separated from her consorts and never reached Ireland, but returned to France. The same fate befell a few of the other vessels. Most of the scattered vessels, however, got into touch with the main body, and by the 20th thirty-five out of forty-three were at Bantry Bay. If

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[1] Tone, ii. 212-14.

[2] *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 264.

Tone had had his way he would have at once landed, and the weather was then calm. But the Admiral's vessel with Hoche was looked for, and meantime the wind rose. For the next few days it was a violent storm, blowing directly from the shore. Twenty of the vessels were then outside the harbour, fifteen had got inside, but even these latter could not attempt a landing in the teeth of such a gale; and the former, unable to maintain their position, were compelled to put to sea. The vessels remaining had 6500 men on board, including Grouchy, and that General, to the great joy of Tone, determined to land. But the fury of the gale increased; the ships dragged their anchors and were tossed about like cockle-shells; no communication was possible between them, for no small boat could live in such a sea, and no spoken word could be heard above the howling of the tempest. Admiral Bouvet refused to obey Grouchy, saying that a landing was impossible, and to the rage of Tone the vessels cut their cables and stood out to sea. In twos and threes they made their way to France. By the 4th of January the last of them had disappeared from the Irish coasts, and by the 11th Grouchy's vessel entered the harbour of Rochelle. Once again the winds had taken sides with England, and had helped her as effectually as when they scattered the ships of the Armada.[1]

But France would be sure to make a further effort. She had become a great power. The whole left bank of the Rhine from Basle to the sea was hers; Belgium, Nice and Savoy were in her hands; Spain and Holland were her allies; Italy had been overrun by her armies; the Pope was humbled; Prussia had ceased to be her enemy; Austria trembled and was willing to make peace with her. England alone remained and so far had proved to be invincible on the sea. But the strain was terrible. The ports of Europe were closed against her ships, her debt was going up by millions, her public securities falling, the Bank of England obliged to suspend payment. She too was anxious for peace; but evidently she had asked too much of France in asking her to give up Belgium, and in consequence negotiations were speedily ended, and Lord Malmesbury, her ambassador, was ordered to quit France within forty-eight hours. The war, then, was to continue, and any moment a new French expedition might be sent to Ireland. Was it wise to keep Ireland divided and disturbed? In Ulster the Orangemen continued their exasperating tactics; and some yeomanry regiments lately raised were but Orangemen with arms in their hands, in receipt of Government pay. They were often as violent and as lawless as the Orangemen, and as little under control. The United Irish Society, on the other hand, had spread throughout the province, meeting violence with violence, and over large areas robberies and murders and midnight raids were common.[1] The state of Munster was very different. Sir Laurence Parsons narrated in Parliament how he had seen the Catholic peasants give every aid to the military when they were marching towards Bantry to encounter Hoche's troops. They had cleaned the roads for them, given them horses and carts for transport purposes, shared their provisions with the soldiers, and prayed for their success.[2] Tone complained that the Irish priests hated the very name of the French Revolution,[3] and evidently their influence was strong in Munster. To confirm all such as these in their loyalty and to win back the disloyal in Ulster, Grattan thought was still possible, by the concession of Catholic Emancipation and even a moderate Parliamentary reform. These views were thought to have found favour in high quarters, and a report was current that Camden was to be recalled and that the Prince of Wales himself was to come over as a messenger of peace; and had this been true how much evil would have been avoided and how much good done![4]

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[1] Tone, ii. 153-78; Lecky, iii. 527-39; Guillon, *La France et l'Irlande pendant la Révolution*, pp. 223-5, 251-4. Grouchy has been often blamed for failing to land, but it is Bouvet and not he that deserves blame.

But it was not to be. Camden, who was firmly opposed to all concession, was retained in office. So also was Fitzgibbon, a far stronger and far abler man, and *he* had declared his determination to make the Irish "as tame as cats."[1] The greedy, the selfish, the intolerant, the pensioner and placeman and political jobber, the brutal magistrate, the insolent officer, the lawless yeoman, the spy, the informer, the perjured witness, the unscrupulous advocate, the partisan judge—all these were ready to support him; and to all the demands made by the people nothing was offered but the naked sword. Under the Insurrection Act large districts were proclaimed; the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended; the militia were increased; two United Irish committees were arrested in Belfast and their papers seized; and in March General Lake was sent to Belfast to disarm Ulster.[2] He issued a proclamation calling on the inhabitants to give up to the military officers any arms they might have, and also to give information about any arms they knew to be concealed. In a short time nearly 6000 guns and bayonets were given up,[3] but there must have been great numbers not given up, and probably concealed, and Lake proceeded to search for them. He had been ordered by the Chief Secretary, Pelham, not to allow any of the search-parties out unaccompanied by an officer. This perhaps was not possible over so large an area, and the result was that the outrages perpetrated by the secret societies throughout Ulster were soon eclipsed in barbarity by the savageries of the King's troops. Party spirit, religious animosity, local antipathies urged on the Orange yeomanry; but even worse than these was a Welsh regiment called the Ancient Britons, whose progress was everywhere marked by robbery and murder. Houses were searched, other houses were burned, property was wantonly destroyed; to extort confessions men were half hanged, then taken down and half hanged again; men were picketed until they fainted, then picketed again; men were killed and maimed; women and children were set upon and done to death. A little boy opened for two soldiers the gate leading to a gentleman's yard, and for his civility they shot him dead and hacked his body to pieces. An old man of seventy, who fled in terror from a party of soldiers, was pursued by them, and while on his knees piteously begging for mercy had his head cut off by a single blow.[1] Another old man named Dixon, mending his cart outside his door, was charged by a certain Captain Fraser with being abroad after sunset and so violating the Insurrection Act. Having been arrested, Dixon tried to escape, when Fraser despatched him with repeated strokes of his sword. The murderer was arraigned at the next assizes, several witnesses testifying to the inoffensive character of the murdered man. But the judge commanded the jury to acquit Fraser, saying he was a gallant officer, and that if Dixon was so good a man as had been represented it was well for him to be out of this wicked world.[2] About the same time Arthur O'Connor was imprisoned for seditious libel;[3] and a few months later a Northern Presbyterian, William Orr, was convicted and hanged for administering a seditious oath, though the jury swore that some of themselves had been in a state of intoxication at the time of giving their verdict.[4] The *Northern Star* newspaper, meantime, was suppressed and its press broken and burned, and in May the whole country was placed under martial law.[5]

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 148-9, 164.

[2] *Ibid.* 275.

[3] Tone, i. 300.

[4] Plowden, ii. 589-90; Lecky, iv. 146-7.

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 16.

[2] *Ibid.* 297-8, 478-82.

[3] *Ibid.* 129-30; Lecky, iv. 29.

It was admitted in Parliament, even by the Government supporters, that Lake's proclamation in Ulster was illegal; still more illegal was his use of torture to extort confession. But these illegalities were defended and condoned. The outrages of the soldiers were either denied or minimized, while those done by the United Irishmen were magnified; and instead of Grattan's party increasing, it was becoming less. In opposing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act he was defeated by 137 to 7 votes; his Emancipation Bill was thrown out by 143 to 19; his motion to repeal the Insurrection Act by 127 to

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[1] Lecky, iv. 11-12, 42-44, 93; Plowden, ii. 627, 646-7.

[2] Cloncurry's *Personal Recollections*, 50-51.

[3] Lecky, iv. 78.

[4] *Ibid.* 106-7.

[5] *Ibid.* 85.

15.[1] Something of the heat and passion so plentiful outside found its way into the calmer atmosphere of Parliamentary debate. Grattan and his supporters were sneered at as the seven wise men; and because Ponsonby advised that concessions should be made, that Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform should be granted, he was assailed by the Solicitor-General, Toler, as a man who had disgraced the character of an Irish gentleman; and Toler avowed that if he had heard outside the walls of Parliament any one use such language as Ponsonby had used, "he would have seized the ruffian by the throat and dragged him to the dust."[2] Toler was little respected even by his own side. Insolent in Parliament, he was known to be a bully at the Bar, and at a later date was both a bully and a buffoon on the Bench; but he said what others felt and had not the courage to say, and his language was in keeping with the spirit of insolence and rancour which now animated the majority in Parliament. In such an assembly Grattan felt that he could do no good, and in May 1797 he and Curran and Ponsonby, and the few who acted with them, ceased to attend Parliament. "We have offered you our measures (Parliamentary Reform, etc.)," he said to the Government, "you will reject them; we deprecate yours; you will persevere; having no hope left to persuade or dissuade, and having discharged our duty, we shall trouble you no more."[3] At the general election, which took place a few months later, he refused to stand for Dublin; but he took care to state his views on public affairs, describing the Government as blooding the magistracy with the poor man's liberty, and with employing the rich like bloodhounds to hunt down the poor.[4]

All this time the United Irishmen were looking for foreign aid. The negotiations were carried on through M. Rheinhart, the French Consul at Hamburg, the Irish agent being Mr. Lewins, a Dublin solicitor, specially deputed by the National Directory.[5] In July 1797 Dr. Macnevin was also despatched to Hamburg to emphasize the demands of Lewins and to give fuller information, which he did in a Memorial of great ability.[1] Lewins and Macnevin were to get a loan from Hamburg, and to get aid in men and arms from France and Spain, and also from Holland, which was France's ally, and which, having deposed its stadtholder, was now the Batavian Republic. In deference to the wishes of the latter power, which was anxious to have the glory of establishing an Irish Republic, it was agreed that a Dutch expedition should first put to sea; and by the 1st of July a strong naval force under Admiral De Winter, with 14,000 men on board, was at the Texel.[2] A French expedition was to be sent from Brest to act in concert with the Dutch. This looked bad for England. Worse still, the Channel Fleet mutinied at Spithead in April, and in the following month a mutiny broke out at the mouth of the Medway, which lasted for six weeks, and in which twenty-five vessels joined, some of them belonging to Admiral Duncan's force set to watch the Dutch at the Texel. In addition, fresh negotiations entered into with France ended in nothing, for once again Lord Malmesbury was ordered to leave France. Yet did England emerge safely from all these dangers. In February Admiral Jervis destroyed the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent.[3] The mutinies at Spithead and at the Medway were quelled, and in October the Dutch were defeated. Fortune had certainly favoured England. Had either the Dutch or French been ready to put to sea in May or June, while the mutiny lasted, they could have landed any force they pleased in Ireland. When the Dutch fleet was ready the winds came to England's aid, and for six weeks De Winter was unable to move.[4] When he sailed out in October the English were equal in strength, equal in vessels, superior in guns. An obstinate battle was fought, the Dutch showing all their old spirit on the sea. But their defeat was complete, and with the loss of 1100 men, the Admiral himself a prisoner, and eleven vessels captured, only a small and shattered remnant of De

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[1] *Parliamentary Debates*, xvii. 16, 126, 207.
[2] *Ibid.* 332.
[3] *Ibid.* 570.
[4] Lecky, iv. 1, 89-90.
[5] *Ibid.* 142-4.

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[1] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 270.

[2] Tone, ii. 227-43.

[3] Lecky, iv. 148, 169-72.

[4] Tone, ii. 243-64

Winter's fleet returned to the Texel.[1] In the meantime a change of government in France had driven Carnot from power and into exile, and in the same month of September General Hoche died; and with the loss of these two, both friendly to Ireland, and the evidence soon available that Bonaparte's thoughts were directed elsewhere, Tone and his friends had to abandon all hope of immediate French aid.[2]

For years the United Irishmen had been organizing. Was all this to be for nothing? Were they to submit until Fitzgibbon had them as tame as cats? or were they to strike back even if no foreign aid came? These questions were soon answered in Ulster. A proclamation was issued in May granting pardon, with certain specified exceptions, to all United Irishmen who would before the 24th of June make their submission, giving at the same time security for their future good behaviour.[3] Had French aid come the submissions would probably have been few. But these Ulstermen felt that without foreign aid they must fail. They were a cautious race, unwilling to take risks; the religious animosities in their midst had reawakened their old antipathy to the Catholics; and for these reasons they made their submission in thousands. The province again began to be loyal; outrages ceased; the summer assizes were held as usual; and the civil law was found sufficient to preserve order.[4]

Antrim and Down refused to desert the United Irish Society. Though strong in parts of Leinster, it had so far made little progress in Munster or Connaught. But it soon spread into Munster, and in its wake outrages followed, arms were seized, houses burned, corn and cattle destroyed.[5] For Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform the masses cared little, but they cared much about rent, taxes and tithes;[6] and now agents of the United Irish Society went among them promising that rents, taxes and tithes would be less if only the

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[1] Lecky, iv. 179-80.

[2] Tone, ii. 270.

[3] Seward's *Collectanea Hibernica* (copy of Proclamation).

[4] Plowden, ii. 627, 642-3.

[5] Lecky, iv. 127-31, 137-41, 177.

[6] *Pieces of Irish History*, p. 199.

United Irishmen succeeded. These agents also reported that the Orangemen were coming south to murder the Catholics; and thus, stimulated by false hopes and frightened by groundless fears, thousands of the Catholic peasants rushed into the ranks of the United Irishmen.

On their side the Government would do nothing. Portland pleaded with Camden for Catholic concessions, but he pleaded in vain.[1] So late as the summer of 1797 these Catholics were relying on petitions to obtain redress, but even their meetings to petition had been proclaimed.[2] At that date the cause of Irish disaffection was ascribed by Grattan to the conduct of the servants of Government who were endeavouring to establish absolute power by unlimited bribery, to set up a system of corruption sustained by coercion, "a ruthless and horrid tyranny imposed on the senate by influence and on the people by arms."[3] The moderate men on both sides withdrew from public life, leaving the field to reactionaries on one side and to revolutionists on the other. The Government seemed as anxious for war as the United Irishmen,[4] and in the last days of 1797 every one who could read the signs of the times knew well that the struggle was near.

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[1] Lecky, iv. 242-3. [2] Plowden, ii. 635. [3] Lecky, iv. 190.
[4] Miss Taylor's *Lord Edward FitzGerald*, pp. 221-2, 257.

CHAPTER III

The Rebellion of 1798

GENERAL COCKBURN, an English officer who served in Ireland during the troubled time of 1798, drew up a list of 49 persons by whom the Irish Government was carried on. This list he called "The Step-ladder; or a View of the Irish Government during the System of Terror."[1] At the topmost rung of the ladder were the Irish Cabinet, consisting of Lords Clare and Castlereagh, the Speaker, the Archbishop of Cashel and Mr. John Beresford. Under these were the understrappers, among them being Mr. Cooke, the Under Secretary, and Lord Carhampton. Lower down were five "supporters of Orangeism, jobbery and corruption," and next were six "servants of the faction," immediately under whom were seven "enemies of liberty." After these came ten "ruffian magistrates, always ready to murder and burn." Lower still were a few "miscreants," such as Sirr, Swan, Sandyes, Gifford, Higgins and Hepenstall. After them came the informers. As we ascend from the latter to the "enemies of liberty," Lords Downshire and Dillon, and Messrs. Trench and Alexander call for no special notice and have not acquired eminence even in infamy. The Archbishop of Tuam was a Beresford, and brother-in-law of the Lord Chancellor. O'Beirne had been educated for the Catholic priesthood, but became a Protestant and a bishop; and Dr. Duigenan, like O'Beirne, was a convert from Catholicity, a coarse bigot whose chief aversion was the religion he had abandoned. Lords Londonderry, Annesley and Kingsborough among the "servants of the faction" were mischievous nonentities; Lord Waterford was one of the innumerable

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[1] Fitzpatrick's *The Sham Squire*, pp. 193-4.

Beresfords; Lord Blaquiere had much experience in public affairs and had a talent for intrigue; and Toler, the Solicitor-General, who subsequently became Lord Norbury, was entirely without principle or a sense of decency. Mr. Corry, one of the "strong supporters of Orangeism," had been a patriot, and was now a violent supporter of the Government. Lords Carleton and Pery might be regarded as respectable men, much superior in character to their disreputable associates. Pery especially was a man of great ability; but the same could not be said of Lord Enniskillen, nor of the "understrappers" Lords Drogheda and Glentworth; and as to Claudius Beresford, his title to be remembered rests on the cruelties he exercised. Lord Carhampton, the grandson of that Henry Luttrell who had betrayed King James at Limerick, was a man whose reputation was so bad that Junius once described him as having disgraced even the name of Luttrell. He had already earned distinction by his cruelties in Connaught in 1795; his private as well as his public character was of the vilest, and perhaps no man in all Ireland was more execrated than he.[1] Mr. Cooke had been originally a clerk, and then becoming Under Secretary, had been dismissed by Fitzwilliam, but after Fitzwilliam's recall had been restored to favour and to office. He had considerable talent for intrigue, was cruel, callous, insolent and treacherous, a man whose natural place was a corrupt court, and to whom honour and justice were but empty names.[2]

But, after all, the most guilty were the five who formed the Irish Cabinet. It was they who controlled the whole machinery of government; who maintained a majority in Parliament by pensions, places and titles; who condoned the crimes of the Orangemen; who stirred up sectarian rancour; encouraged such men as Carhampton in all their cruelties; employed such tools as Cooke; promoted such lawyers as Toler; applauded all the savageries of magistrates and military officers; and rewarded the perjurer and the informer when he swore away the lives of the innocent as well as the guilty. Agar, who was

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[1] *Sham Squire*, pp. 46-49.

[2] *Ibid.* 124 *et seq.*

Archbishop of Cashel and subsequently Archbishop of Dublin, died, in 1809, as Earl of Normanton, and had his character summed up in a contemporary publication in two lines:

> Adieu, thou mitred nothingness, adieu,
> Thy failings many and thy virtues few.[1]

Ambitious and avaricious, he entirely neglected his episcopal duties for affairs of State, and while the curates of Dublin were starving on £50 a year, he amassed so much wealth himself that he died worth £400,000.[2] Beresford was at the head of the Revenue Board, and so powerful from position and family influence that he was called the King of Ireland. Both the Archbishop and the King of Ireland were stubbornly opposed to all popular concession, and favoured or suggested every act of severity done by the Government; and in complete accord with them were the Speaker, Mr. Foster, and Lord Clare. The latter seems to have hated the whole Irish people, and never spoke of the country or the people but in opprobrious terms. Unlike Archbishop Agar, however, he was not fond of money. His passion was to rule, and with him this meant to tyrannize, to insult, to browbeat, to trample on any one who opposed him. Lord Castlereagh had entered Parliament as a reformer in 1790. He had employed Neilson, the United Irishman, as his electioneering agent, was a member of the Whig Club and of a Volunteer association, and for some years in Parliament always voted for Parliamentary reform.[3] Gradually he shifted his ground, and by 1797 he had done such service on the Government side of the House of Commons, and shown such ability for public affairs, that he was appointed Chief Secretary in place of Mr. Pelham, then in England. At first the post was but temporary; but Pelham never resumed office, and during 1798 it was by Castlereagh it was filled.

It has been said that in dealing with the people the Viceroy Camden was in favour of milder measures, but that he was constantly outvoted by Clare and Castlereagh.[4] It is true that before going to Ireland he favoured a moderate Parliamentary reform and some other minor concessions; but after going to Ireland he ceased to be a reformer in any sense, and would not, even under pressure from Portland, consent to have anything done for the Catholics.[1] It is true also that in opposition to his chief advisers in Ireland he disapproved of appointing Lake Commander-in-Chief, but his objection was to Lake's incapacity for high command, not to the severities which Lake employed.[2] Camden, it is certain, was a less able and a much weaker man than either Clare or Castlereagh, and was, no doubt, awed and controlled by their more commanding wills. At all events, he made no effective protest against their policy of savage repression; he allowed himself to be dominated by them; it was their views he put forward in his letters to Portland and Pitt; and every barbarous act of the Irish Government in 1798 and in the previous years was done with his sanction and under the shelter of his name. As for Pitt and Portland, they regarded Irish affairs—in Grattan's words—"with lazy contumely," content to believe Camden and Castlereagh that the country was seething with sedition, and that what the masses wanted was not reform but separation from England. Hence they approved of Carhampton's illegalities and of Lake's proclamation, of Government prosecutions and of military violence, of rewarding partisan judges, unscrupulous advocates, perjured witnesses and degraded informers.

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[1] *Sham Squire*, p. 198. [2] D'Alton's *Archbishops of Dublin*, pp. 350-51.
[3] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 8-9.
[4] *Ibid.* 157-8; *Sham Squire*, p. 227; *Sir John Moore's Diary*, i. 286.

There was a plentiful supply of these latter. Joining the ranks of the Defenders or United Irishmen, they learned the secrets of these societies, and then, turning on their fellow-members, sent them to the dock and to the scaffold. Sometimes it was the desire to save themselves which led them to betray others; sometimes they acted merely for money. In many cases they were men of broken fortune and desperate character, utterly unworthy of being believed. Curran, for instance, had no difficulty in showing at the Drogheda Assizes in 1794 that the informer against the Defenders was a perjurer.

[1] Lecky, iv. 27-28, 67-68, 230.

[2] *Secret Service under Pitt*, p. 358.

The witness against Dr. Drennan he described truly as an abandoned profligate. Captain Armstrong, who swore away the lives of the brothers Sheares, was an infidel, an acknowledged disciple of Tom Paine; and Reynolds, who betrayed Bond, was shown to have no regard for the sanctity of an oath.[1] A more repulsive type of informer was O'Brien, who was subsequently hanged for murder, and whom Curran described as dipping the Evangelists in blood. He and others, known at the time as the "battalion of testimony," were kept at Dublin Castle, and under the tutelage of Sirr learned to swear away the lives of the innocent as well as the guilty. They came into court "from the very chambers of the Castle, where the wretch that is buried a man lies till his heart has time to fester and dissolve and is then dug up an informer." [2]

A more numerous class of informers were those who never appeared in court, and who before the public were honest and patriotic, but in secret were Government spies in receipt of Government pay. Duggan from Tyrone took part in the rebellions of 1798 and 1803, and yet in one year drew £500 as a Government spy. Maguckian was the legal adviser of the United Irishmen and systematically betrayed his clients.[3] Macnally, the patriot barrister and close friend of Curran, was for thirty years before his death in receipt of a pension, and only with difficulty was his treachery discovered after his death.[4] Magan, who betrayed Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was a Catholic barrister and a United Irishman.[5] Mr. Turner, LL.D., was on the executive of the United Irish Society, the trusted friend of Lord Edward and his wife, imprisoned with Emmet and others in 1798, and even attainted, and all the time was telling what he knew and receiving payment for it.[6] Dillon, a solicitor at Dundalk, ruined his friend Dickie, another solicitor.[7] Dr.

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[1] *Curran's Speeches*, pp. 194-5, 332-4. [2] *Ibid.* 297, 309-12.

[3] *Sham Squire*, pp. 272-9, 340-1.

[4] *Secret Service under Pitt*, pp. 174-210; *Curran's Life*, by his Son, ii. 14.

[5] *Secret Service*, pp. 126-53.

[6] Moore's *Lord Edward FitzGerald*, pp. 410-23.

[7] *Sham Squire*, pp. 339-40.

Conlon, of the same town, endeavoured to ruin his colleague, Dr. Dromgoole. Robert O'Connor gave information against his brother Arthur; and it is not unlikely that Sir Jonah Barrington also betrayed his friends.[1] Stranger still and more shameful, among those in receipt of secret service money was Father Doran of Monasterevin, who got £50; and that amount was also given on several occasions to Father Barry, P.P., of Mallow.[2] There are many names on the list difficult, if not impossible, to identify, and as to the amounts, they varied from very small sums to £5000, this being the amount given to Reynolds.[3] Money was not spared, and for the four years ending September 1801 more than £38,000 was thus expended by the Irish Government; and this is exclusive of pensions and places given as the reward of treachery.[4]

Much valuable information thus came into the hands of the Government, and hence they were able to arrest the Ulster leaders in 1796, just as Hoche and Tone were preparing to leave Brest.[5] Newell, a miniature painter of Belfast, gave much information about the Ulster United Irishmen in the summer of 1797;[6] Macnally was in a position to know much and did not fail to tell all he knew. Francis Higgins, nicknamed the Sham Squire, one of the lowest characters of the time, though not a United Irishman, had, as owner of the *Freeman's Journal*, many opportunities of getting information, and was not only a paid informer himself but even paid others to act as such.[7] But Turner's services were the most important of all. He was able to transmit from Hamburg a copy of Macnevin's Memorial and also the report of the French secret agent at London, M. Jagerhorn; he had interviews with Talleyrand about the designs of France; and in October 1797 he gave the names of the Executive Committee of the United Irishmen (himself being one), a body which had supreme control of the whole conspiracy.[1] So much being known, Lord Clonmel, the Irish Chief Justice, suggested that the leaders should be taken up under the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act and the insurrection thus prevented, and to this view Camden himself inclined.[2] But they were outvoted in the Privy Council by Fitzgibbon and his friends, who were so displeased with Clonmel that they no longer invited him to their Council meetings. They were really anxious for an insurrection and preferred to let matters drift, at least until evidence was available to convict the Irish leaders in open court. Camden was most anxious that Turner should come forward, but that gentleman positively declined. He told his tale in London, not to any official or minister, but to Lord Downshire, whom he interviewed in an empty house, dressed in a cloak and slouched hat. Even to Pitt he was only "Lord Downshire's friend," and no sum of money, however great, could tempt him to become a public informer.[3]

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[1] *Secret Service*, pp. 340, 351; *Sir John Moore's Diary*, i. 285.

[2] Gilbert's *Documents relating to Ireland*, pp. 57, 61, 66, 75.

[3] *Ibid.* 26.

[4] *Ibid.* 2.

[5] *Secret Service*, pp. 59, 94; Teeling's *Personal Narrative*, pp. 13, 15, 27, 34-35.

[6] Gilbert, pp. 104-14.

[7] *Vide The Sham Squire.*

Early in 1798 the United Irish Society, though weak in Connaught, had 110,000 members in Ulster, more than 100,000 in Munster, and 70,000 in Leinster.[4] The supreme control had then been transferred from Belfast to Dublin, and was in the hands of Emmet, O'Connor, Macnevin, Bond and MacCormack. The last named was too moderate for the extreme section of the rank and file, and thinking his life was in danger he fled the country. Bond was a Dissenter and a rich merchant; Emmet and Macnevin were men of ability but knew nothing of war, nor did O'Connor, though he afterwards became a French general. On military matters Lord Edward FitzGerald's advice was usually sought, though not always acted upon. In the autumn of 1797, for instance, a deputation came to the Supreme Council from the militia sergeants then in Dublin, offering to seize the barracks and Castle, a proposal favoured by Lord Edward but rejected by the Council.[1] There was also an intention to commence the insurrection on the following Christmas morning, but again a majority of the Council favoured waiting for the French.[2] In the beginning of February, however, assurances came that the French would arrive at the latest in May. Arthur O'Connor was then deputed to go to France and hasten their departure; a military committee was appointed to organize the forces at home; and Lord Edward was named Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces.

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[1] These were Jackson, Bond, Chambers, Dickson, Father Casey, Emmet, Macnevin, Keogh, MacCormack, Turner, A. O'Connor, Orr, Teeling, Lord Edward FitzGerald, etc.

[2] Fitzpatrick's *Ireland before the Union*, pp. 59-60.

[3] Lecky, iv. 259-60.

[4] *Ibid.* 252.

He was then in his thirty-fifth year, a man of singularly attractive character, frank, manly, chivalrous, sincere, absolutely without guile, utterly unselfish, and of broad human sympathies. Even among his own class he had no personal enemies, though he had many bitter political opponents; and as to the masses of the people he was the best beloved of all the patriots of his time.[3] He was a Geraldine, married to a beautiful Frenchwoman whose character was as winning as his own; the son of Ireland's only duke, he threw rank and fortune to the winds to fight for the people, and he perished in their cause; and in his own day he was their idol, as his memory has been idolized since then. But he was a poor conspirator. Coming back from Basle to Hamburg in 1796, after his interview with Hoche, he indirectly hinted to a lady fellow-traveller what had been the object of his journey, and the lady promptly sent the news to London.[4] While with his regiment in America he had given abundant proof of conspicuous personal courage and had endeared himself both to officers and soldiers.[5] But there is no evidence to show that he was a man of superior ability, and certainly none to show that he could lead large masses of men. However, he took his position quite seriously, and proceeded to have everything in readiness for the coming campaign.[6]

Meanwhile the Irish Government had not been idle. The

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[1] Miss Taylor's *Life of Lord Edward FitzGerald*, pp. 230-31; Moore's *Life*, pp. 240-41.

[2] Gilbert, pp. 119-20.

[3] Lecky, *History of Ireland*, iv. 256.

[4] Taylor, p. 207.

[5] *Ibid.* 40.

[6] Lecky, iv. 258.

Press, which had been set up in place of the *Northern Star*, and in which Lord Edward, Macnally and O'Connor were shareholders, the last named being the editor, was itself now suppressed.[1] O'Connor himself, on his way to France, was arrested at Margate and tried at Maidstone for high treason. The great English statesmen, Fox, Erskine and Sheridan, as well as Lord Moira and Grattan, testified as to his character and he was acquitted; but an Irish priest named O'Coigley who accompanied him was convicted and hanged.[2] More important still was the arrest at Oliver Bond's house, on the 12th of March, of the Provincial Directory for Leinster. Reynolds was the informer. He was brother-in-law to Wolfe Tone and an old friend of Lord Edward's, whom he kept from the meeting, and so prevented his arrest. But all the others were arrested and their papers seized, and on the 30th of the same month martial law and free quarters were proclaimed.[3] General Abercromby was then in chief military command in Ireland. Nearly a year before Camden wished to have Carhampton, then Commander-in-Chief, superseded by Lord Cornwallis; but the latter refused the post unless large concessions were made to the Catholics, and hence Carhampton remained in office until November, when Abercromby was appointed. He was a Scotchman who had formerly served in Ireland, had also seen service in the East and West Indies, and was a capable soldier and a man of honour. He found the Irish army demoralized, and in the end of February issued an order declaring that they were formidable to every one but the enemy. And he soon after, and with further knowledge, added that within the year just passed every cruelty and crime that could be committed by Cossacks or Calmucks had been committed in Ireland by the army, and with the sanction of those high in office.[4] As in duty bound, he carried out the proclamation of the 30th of March throughout the counties of Leinster and Munster. But he was out of touch with Clare and Castlereagh, he was too mild and too merciful, and in the following month he threw up his command and returned to England.[1]

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[1] Lecky, iv. 196-7.

[2] Madden, ii. 298-302; Lord Cloncurry, pp. 65-67.

[3] Plowden, ii. 676-9; Lecky, iv. 261-5.

[4] Lecky, iv. 203-4, 208-9.

His successor was General Lake, who had disarmed Ulster in the previous year and who now proceeded in the counties of Leinster and Munster to drive the people to madness. A proclamation was issued on the 3rd of April demanding the surrender of all arms within ten days. Wherever no arms were surrendered the soldiers quartered themselves in the houses, took provisions and farm horses, wantonly destroyed property.[2] In these outrages the Ancient Britons, the Hessians and the North Cork Militia took the lead. As the people wore their hair short they were called "croppies," and a sergeant of the North Cork, nicknamed Tom the Devil, invented a new torture, which consisted of a linen or brown paper cap filled with burning pitch and then pressed on the head of the victim. Sometimes moistened gunpowder was rubbed into the hair, which was then set on fire; often an ear was cut off. As the soldiers passed along men were called to their doors and shot dead in the open day; men were half-hanged, picketed, flogged.[3] Some women had certainly taken the United oath, and those suspected of having done so were treated with the same cruelty as the men.[4] Those who wore green ribbons or green dresses had them torn off and had to submit to the grossest acts of indecency even in public. Many a peasant girl became the prey of some brutal soldier, maddened with Orange bigotry and drink. Her beauty attracted him; her innocence and modesty furnished her with no protection against his lust; he jeered at her agonizing shrieks; and often she was outraged in the presence of husband or brother or parent, who were powerless to rescue her from dishonour.[5]

At Drogheda a respectable citizen, because he wore a gold ring with a shamrock device, was taken and flogged to death. In the same town a young man suspected of knowing where arms were concealed was sentenced to 5000 lashes. A portion of this punishment he endured, but being unable to stand the torture he feigned to give information (in reality he knew nothing), and while the soldiers were absent he cut his throat.[1] In Dublin the streets were deserted, public amusements had ceased, the names of the inhabitants had to be posted on the doors of the houses, families were flying in terror to England, the jails were full, droves of men were being sent to the fleet, the coffins were opened and searched for arms as they were carried to the grave.[2] In the military barracks, at the old Custom-House, at the Royal Exchange, most of all at Beresford's riding-school, the lash was unsparingly used. The shrieks of the victims could be heard even in the Castle, and a young man was seen to issue from a barrack with a burning pitch cap on his head and to plunge headlong into the Liffey, thus gladly seeking in death for relief from the tortures he endured.[3] Lieutenant Hepenstall of the Wicklow Militia, a giant in height and in strength, in order to extort confession, often put his handkerchief round a man's neck, threw him across his shoulder, and then walked or ran along until his victim was half-hanged, or perhaps a corpse dangling at his heels. For these exploits he has earned infamous notoriety as the Walking Gallows.[4] Equally infamous was Judkin FitzGerald, the High Sheriff of Tipperary. At the head of a flying column he rode through the county, flogging whomsoever he suspected. At Clogheen he flogged a shopkeeper in front of his door because he would not say who swore him a United Irishman, though the man had never been sworn at all. At Clonmel he flogged a French tutor because he suspected he was a United Irish-

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[1] Lecky, iv. 213-15.

[2] Plowden, ii. 677.

[3] Lecky, iv. 270-76; Moore's *Lord Edward FitzGerald* (Letter of Lady Napier).

[4] Madden, iii. 202; Teeling, p. 73.

[5] Plowden, ii. 705; Gordon's *History of the Rebellion*, pp. 54-55.

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[1] Teeling, p. 74.

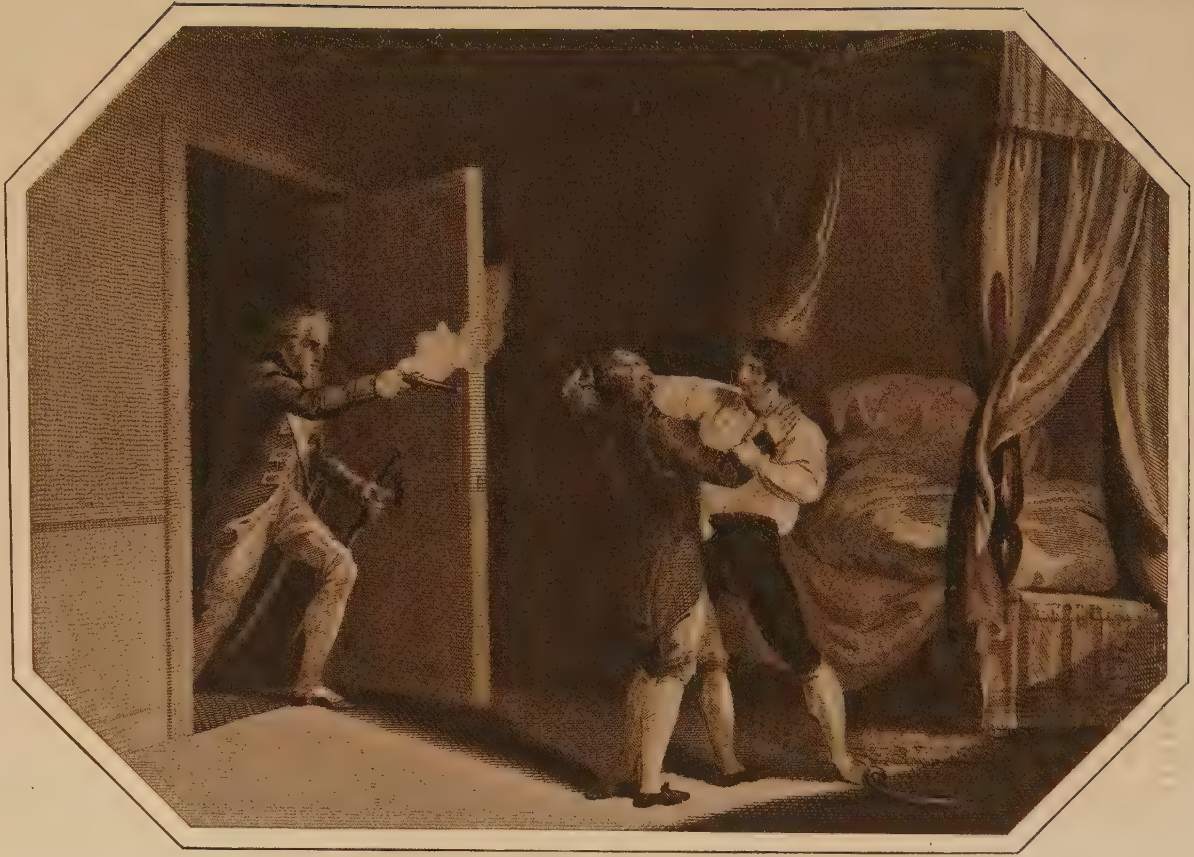
[2] *Curran's Life*, i. 378-80.

[3] Plowden, ii. 695; Teeling, p. 75.

[4] After his death the following was suggested as a suitable epitaph:

Here lie the bones of Hepenstall,
Judge, jury, gallows, rope and all.

(Fitzpatrick's *Ireland before the Union*, pp. 244-6.)



THE ARREST OF LORD EDWARD FITZGERALD

FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT

man, and above all because he found in his pocket a perfectly harmless French note, which the savage was too illiterate to understand.[1] It was said that in order to inflict the greater pain he had his scourges steeped in salt. The spirit of Tipperary has always been dangerous to rouse, but it must have slept in those days, when no Tipperaryman was bold enough and courageous enough to rid the earth of such a scoundrel.

The popular leaders still counselled patience, but the people could hardly be restrained. Many of them also were giving up their arms, and some turning informers, and at last the leaders themselves became anxious for war and fixed on the 23rd of May for the insurrection.[2] By that time the prospect had become dark. In the end of February Bonaparte pointed out to the French Directory the difficulties of a descent on England, and advised as more feasible an expedition to Malta and Egypt, which would penetrate as far as India, and defeating England there, would dry up the sources of her corrupting wealth. In accordance with this advice an army of the East was formed; the expedition to England or to Ireland was abandoned; and on the 19th of May Bonaparte with 20,000 men set sail from Toulon.[3]

The very same day Lord Edward FitzGerald was taken prisoner. For more than two months the Government had been on his track. He had frequently to change his place of concealment, but all the time he kept in touch with the popular leaders, and to them he proposed, but in vain, to attack the House of Lords on the 18th of May while they sat to try Lord Kingston for murder.[4] He had formulated the plans for the 23rd, which included the capture of Dublin, the surprise of the military camp at Loughlinstown, and the taking prisoners of the Executive Government. He had gone through the city and outside it, and had been seen by many, but not one of them betrayed him, though £1000 was offered for his capture. At last, however, Higgins, the Sham Squire, got his friend

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[1] *Sham Squire*, pp. 216-19; Lecky, iv. 277-88.

[2] Gordon, pp. 65-66, 73.

[3] Guillon, pp. 332-5.

[4] Miss Taylor's *Lord Edward FitzGerald*, p. 297.

Magan, the United Irishman, to turn traitor, and on the 19th of May, Major Sirr, accompanied by Major Sandyes, Captain Ryan and some soldiers, proceeded to the house of Mr. Murphy of Thomas Street. Lord Edward was resting on a bed after dinner when Sandyes and Ryan entered the room. The first-named fired at him and wounded him slightly, the latter attacked him with a sword-cane. But Lord Edward made a fierce resistance, stabbed Sandyes with a dagger, and mortally wounded Ryan, and it was only when his arm had been broken by a pistol-shot from Sirr that he was overpowered. He was then taken to Newgate prison, where he died of his wounds on the 4th of June.[1] The day following his capture the new Directory of the United Irishmen was broken up by the arrest of the brothers Sheares and the flight of Lawless; and the insurrectionary movement was thus left without a leader. To make matters worse the Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral advising the people not to be deluded by impious men, but to give up their arms, stand by the existing constitution, and give allegiance to "the best of kings" and to "an enlightened legislature."[2] To advise the people to abandon the insurrection was certainly sound advice, as the rebellion had no chance of success; but it was surely not necessary to describe George III. as the best of kings, for Dr. Troy at least must have known that his obstinate bigotry stood in the way of Catholic concession; and as to the Irish Parliament, it had not the least share of public spirit, and was without question the most corrupt and the most contemptible legislature in Europe.

These varying causes had the effect of limiting the area of the rebellion. Warned by the informers, the Government took ample means to keep Dublin quiet; and only portions of Wicklow, Kildare, Carlow, Dublin, Meath and Queen's Counties rose. On the morning of the 24th the mail coaches to Belfast, Cork, Limerick and Athlone were stopped, and within the next three days there were encounters with the military at Naas,

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[1] Moore's *Lord Edward FitzGerald*, pp. 277-313.

[2] Seward, iii. 271.

Clane, Prosperous, Kilcullen and Monasterevin in Kildare County, at Dunboyne and Tara in Meath, at Baltinglass in Wicklow, at Lucan, Rathfarnham and Tallaght in Dublin, and at Carlow town. But skill and discipline and superior arms prevailed over numbers, and in every case except at Prosperous the military were victorious.[1] At Prosperous the barracks and part of the town were set on fire, and the soldiers—in all about 70—were either burned to death or piked as they emerged from the burning buildings. The rebels were led by Lieutenant Esmond of the yeomanry, who in the darkness of night left his quarters at Clane, and then when Prosperous had fallen into the rebel's hands, quietly returned to Clane as if nothing had happened. His treachery, however, was discovered, and being made prisoner and sent to Dublin, he was hanged, receiving in a traitor's doom the punishment of his crime.[2] Disheartened by failure, a large party of rebels in Kildare made terms with General Dundas and surrendered their arms. Another party at Gibbetrath in the same county had also agreed to give up their arms, and were assembled for the purpose when General Duff came up from Limerick with 600 men. As the soldiers advanced to take up the arms of the rebels, one of the latter fired in the air, and Duff's men, feigning to believe that treachery was intended, fell on the unresisting multitude and cut them to pieces. Dundas was able to stay the slaughter, but not till 300 had been killed.[3]

Within a week the rebellion was stamped out, the Government had triumphed, and it seemed as if their troubles were at an end. But the fire thus so easily extinguished in the counties named was now kindled afresh in the county of Wexford, where it burned with a fiercer glow. So far but few of the Wexfordmen had become United Irishmen, and so secure did the Government feel that in the whole county there were but 600 regular troops, the garrisons being mostly composed of yeomanry and North Cork Militia. These were but little under control, and, being Orangemen, were animated by religious animosity. After the proclamation of martial law they indulged freely in every excess, burning houses, flogging, hanging, torture. A respectable gentleman named Pery, being arrested on suspicion, had his hair rubbed with moistened gunpowder and then set on fire.[1] A man named Driscoll, for having two Catholic prayer-books in his pocket, with which he might have been administering unlawful oaths, was half-hanged three times and four times flogged; and a poor hedge schoolmaster who refused to promise that if he learned anything hereafter of concealed pikes he would inform, was also flogged.[2] A magistrate named Hunter Gowan marched into Gorey at the head of his yeomen, one of whom, ever ready to act as executioner, was provided with a cat-o'-nine-tails and a hanging rope. The people fled in terror at their approach, and at night slept in the fields; and one night in a village so deserted the houses were searched, and one man being found, was taken out and flogged. A yeoman used the lash, another threw water on the back of the victim, whose piteous cries were heard afar off through the stillness of the night; and the following morning the place looked as if a pig had been killed there.[3] Across the mountains from Wicklow, Carlow and Kildare came tales of fearful cruelty, of flogging and torture, and of no quarter being given in battle.[4] It was said that the Orangemen had declared that they would wade ankle-deep in Papist blood. It was what the people feared much more than what they saw which made them United Irishmen; they thought it was better to fall fighting than to be massacred, and on the 26th of May Father John Murphy of Booleyvogue raised the standard of rebellion.[5]

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[1] Gordon, pp. 84-85, 88-98. [2] *Ibid.* 86-87. [3] *Ibid.* 100-102.

His first encounter was with Lieutenant Bookey, Bookey and his little party all falling in the battle. The next day being Whit Sunday, Father John and his men took up a position on Oulart Hill. From Wexford Colonel Foster and 110 men of the North Cork Militia were sent to disperse them, but the assailants, at first victorious, were driven back by a

[1] Gordon, pp. 207-8. [2] Hay's *History of the Rebellion*, pp. 61-63.
[3] *Ibid.* 74. [4] *Ibid.* 72; *Ireland before the Union*, pp. 260-64.
[5] Gordon, pp. 104-5.

charge of pikemen, and such was the slaughter that only the colonel himself, a sergeant and three privates escaped alive from the conflict. In the meantime a party of rebels had been driven from Kilthomas Hill, the soldiers following up their victory by every species of outrage, burning of houses, burning of Catholic churches, the slaughter of unarmed and unresisting. These outrages added to Father John's forces, already increased by his victory at Oulart, and without delay he advanced to Camolin and Ferns, both of which places he captured, and then advanced to the attack of Enniscorthy. The resistance of the military, aided by many Protestant volunteers, was desperate and prolonged; but numbers and enthusiasm carried the day, and Enniscorthy fell into the rebels' hands. The soldiers and those who aided them, or were in sympathy with them, fled in confusion to Wexford, whither the Protestants from many districts turned as to a city of refuge.[1] The place was strongly garrisoned; but the soldiers, who in February were formidable to every one but the enemy, had become still further demoralized since the departure of Abercromby, and the victory of the rebels at Oulart and Enniscorthy had filled them with such terror that they sent messages to Enniscorthy to Father John asking for terms. No terms, however, would be given them, and the rebels, intent on fighting, marched south and took up a position at Three Rocks, a little to the west of Wexford. General Fawcett sent from Duncannon 200 men under Colonel Maxwell, and these arrived safely at Wexford. Fawcett himself followed, and halting at Taghmon, sent forward a body of 88 men, with two guns. They were met at Three Rocks by the rebels and cut to pieces, the guns being captured and the men all killed. On receipt of this news Fawcett fell back to Duncannon, and Colonel Maxwell, who had gone out from Wexford to effect a junction with Fawcett, returned to the town, and such was the cowardice and terror of the garrison that they abandoned the place, marching to Duncannon by the sea road, and thus avoiding the rebels at Three Rocks. Burning houses and slaughtered peasants

[1] Gordon, pp. 110-15; Hay, p. 94.

marked their passage, and still further embittered the insurgents, who on their side took possession of Wexford.[1] Gorey, which had been deserted by the military on the 28th, was reoccupied by them two days later; they also held the district round Arklow; but except these places all the county of Wexford was in the rebels' hands, who were now in great strength, and had set up three encampments, one at Three Rocks, one seven miles west of Gorey, and one just outside Enniscorthy, on the summit and slopes of Vinegar Hill.[2]

But the insurgent leaders well knew that even had all Wexford been in their hands and every adult Wexfordman in arms, they must nevertheless, if unaided, fail. It became necessary, then, to rouse the neighbouring counties, and with this object in view a force of 5000 men was detached from the main body at Vinegar Hill, and on the morning of the 1st of June Newtownbarry was attacked. The garrison of 500 soon abandoned the town, which was occupied by the rebels; but instead of securing their position they fell to drinking, and while they were intoxicated and all heedless of danger, the military came back. After some resistance, the rebels were driven out, with the loss of 200 of their number, and thus the attempt to pass into Carlow had failed.[3] Three days later a more desperate attack was met with more desperate and equally successful resistance at New Ross. The rebel force made the attack from their headquarters at Carrickbyrne, under the leadership of Beuchamp Bagenal Harvey. Though a Protestant and a landlord, he was known to have popular sympathies, and as such he and Messrs. Colclough and FitzGerald, also men of property, had been imprisoned in Wexford. When Enniscorthy was taken the two latter were sent by the military authorities to negotiate with the rebels and induce them, if possible, to lay down their arms. Being unsuccessful in this, FitzGerald went over to the rebel side; Colclough returned to Wexford, where he remained in prison until the town fell into the rebels' hands, and then, having been released from prison, as well as Harvey, the latter was made commander-in-chief of the rebel army. He had no knowledge of military affairs and no capacity to lead; but being induced to accept the position (for he was not anxious for it), he gathered the whole forces of South Wexford together at Carrickbyrne Hill, and then marched to Corbet Hill within a mile of New Ross.

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[1] Gordon, pp. 118-23.

[2] *Ibid.* 128-9.

[3] *Ibid.* 129-31.

On the morning of the 5th of June he summoned New Ross to surrender, but the only answer he received was to have his messenger shot dead. Whatever plans were formed for the attack on the town were dislocated by this event, for the insurgents would not be restrained, and rushing forward, under the command of John Kelly of Kilfian, they drove in the enemy's outposts. The fields in front of the Three Bullet Gate, and the space inside the gate itself, were strongly held by the enemy, who numbered in all 1200, General Johnson being in supreme command. As the rebels advanced they were met by a heavy fire from some guns placed near the gate. However, Kelly, reinforced by Cloney, and now having perhaps nearly 2000 under his command, continued to advance, and, entering the gate, was severely handled by some soldiers posted there, who opened a damaging cross fire. Still the rebels advanced, driving the enemy before them through the town and across the wooden bridge to the Kilkenny side of the Barrow. Two parties of Johnson's men still maintained their positions, one under Major Vandeleur at Irishtown, another at the market-house. And now, instead of the assailants following up the advantage gained and dislodging these two parties, they sought the public-houses for drink, which some of them too freely consumed. The others, fearing a return of Johnson's main body, and insufficiently supported by Harvey, who had sent them no reinforcements, retraced their steps and once more took up a position at the Three Bullet Gate. A second time they advanced, taking with them a howitzer; but being unable to dislodge Vandeleur or those at the market-house, they again fell back. By this time some of the rebels in the town were drunk, and Johnson, recrossing the bridge, fell upon them, killed many, and drove the remainder back, and it seemed as if the hard-fought contest which had now lasted for hours was over. But the rebels were not yet conquered, and after resting for a little at the Three Bullet Gate, they renewed the attack, and again drove Johnson's men before them through the town and across the river. They had shown the most desperate valour. Regardless of the fire of the enemy's cannon, they marched up to the very mouths of the guns. Again, however, their valour was disgraced by intemperance. Their gallant leader, Kelly, also fell mortally wounded, and this spread a panic even among those who were sober. Johnson took advantage of their helplessness, and recrossing the Barrow, charged with all his strength, killed many who were too drunk to resist, drove the remainder before him through the Three Bullet Gate, and after the most obstinate contest of the whole war—a contest which had lasted in all for twelve hours—New Ross remained in the hands of the English. Lord Mountjoy and 230 others fell on the English side. On the side of the rebels, who at no time exceeded 5000, the number who fell is put as low as 500 and as high as 2000, and could not be accurately ascertained. Many fell in actual battle, many while intoxicated, others fell in the pursuit, and not a few of these were non-combatants. With these losses, and the loss of some of their guns, the rebels returned to Carrickbyrne Hill.[1]

In the north of the county they did better than at New Ross. On the 3rd of June General Loftus arrived at Gorey with 1500 men and five pieces of artillery. Colonel Walpole also came with reinforcements from Carnew; and with this strong force Loftus, on the morning of the 4th, determined to attack the rebels at Corrigrua Hill, and perhaps break up the rebellion in Wexford. From Gorey his force marched in two divisions, the larger part under himself by Ballycanew, the smaller part under Walpole by Camolin. Somewhere near Camolin they were to join hands and fall in strength on the enemy. But the rebels had got secret information as to these movements, and leaving Loftus unmolested, they marched towards Gorey, with the design of intercepting Walpole. The latter officer was self-conceited, obstinate and incompetent, and in spite of all remonstrance from his fellow-officers, he advanced along the road in close column, without employing scouts or skirmishers. Suddenly, at a place called Tubberneering, he encountered the rebels in strong force. They had lain concealed in the fields of corn and behind the hedges which skirted the road, and when Walpole's force had reached a spot where there were high ditches topped with hedges on each side of the road, the rebels opened a murderous fire. Walpole himself was instantly shot down; many of his officers and men shared his fate; his guns were taken and turned with fatal effect against the survivors, a remnant only of whom escaped with all speed to Gorey, through which they hurried on to Arklow, leaving all their guns in the enemy's hands. Loftus, who was marching parallel to Walpole and near enough to hear the report of the firing at Tubberneering, had sent 70 of his men across the country as a small reinforcement; but their fate was that of Walpole's men, and every man of them was either killed or taken prisoner. Unable himself to reach Tubberneering in time, and unable to carry out his plans, now that Walpole had failed, Loftus retraced his steps; but finding Gorey already occupied by the enemy, who were strongly posted there and in possession of all the guns it contained, he made a cross march to Carnew, where, however, he considered himself in danger, and retreated still further to Tullow in Carlow, leaving both Gorey and Carnew to his foes.[1]

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[1] Gordon, pp. 141-7; Hay, pp. 141-6; Cloney, pp. 35-43; Taylor, pp. 78-90. Taylor puts the rebel loss at 7000, manifestly a gross exaggeration.

Had the rebels followed up their victory, Arklow would have fallen into their hands, for the garrison fled panic-stricken to Wicklow. The latter town, as well as Bray, could have been easily captured, and the rebel army, swollen by great accessions from Wicklow and other counties, would soon have been thundering at the gates of Dublin. But they wasted their time at Gorey plundering and punishing their enemies, and not until the 7th of June were they at Arklow. By that time reinforcements had been sent by the Government at Dublin, and Arklow was strongly held by 1600 men, with abundance of arms and heavy guns. General Needham was in chief command, his second being Colonel Skerret. The rebels were under Fathers John and Michael Murphy and Mr. Edmond Kyan. Pikes were abundant. It is said that 5000 had firearms, there were some heavy guns, and Kyan knew something about their management. The whole force, according to Gordon, was 27,000; but he could not know this accurately—it was a random guess—and in such a narrow space so large a number of men could not at any time have been effectually engaged. Certainly they vastly outnumbered the English, and it is also certain that they attacked with great resolution. One column advancing by the sea road captured all the enemy's advanced positions and drove them in confusion across the river into the town. But reinforcements were hurried up; the English guns played with destructive effect on the advancing masses, and the rebels were unable to cross the river and so turn the enemy's left wing, as they had intended to do. A fiercer contest raged on the Gorey road and in the fields adjoining. Under Father Michael Murphy dense masses of the rebels made repeated charges; the guns were so effectively handled by Kyan that some of the English guns had been put out of action, and the English left wing at this point had been driven from its position. Matters became so serious that Needham was about to sound a retreat. But Skerret persuaded him to continue the fight, and when Father Murphy, charging at the head of his column, was shot dead, the rebels lost courage and retreated, leaving Arklow in English hands. Though the contest lasted from four o'clock until late in the evening, and was very determined on both sides, the losses were not great. Gordon puts the rebel loss at 300, that on the English side being "very small."[1]

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[1] Gordon, pp. 138-40; Maxwell, pp. 109-11; Hay, pp. 138-40; *Halliday Pamphlets*, No. 739, pp. 40-41.

In all these contests the insurgents had shown conspicuous courage, and Castlereagh declared he could never have believed that untrained peasants could have fought so well.[1] But cowardice and cruelty were not altogether wanting. Those who had at an early stage of the fight run away from New Ross brought the news to Scullabogue, at the foot of Carrickbyrne Hill, that the English were victorious, and were murdering all the Irish prisoners in their hands. In revenge, they showed an order from one of their leaders commanding that the prisoners detained in Scullabogue barn should be instantly executed. The guards refused to obey the order—in reality it was forged—but they were overpowered and the barn set on fire. A few of the prisoners emerged into the open but were at once piked; the remainder were roasted alive. Gordon puts the total number murdered at 200, Hay at less than 80; and the latter account is the more probable, as the barn was but 34 feet long and 15 wide. It was a cruel and cowardly act, quite unworthy of the Wexfordmen, and by every man of honour in the rebellion was regarded with horror.[2] At Vinegar Hill the prisoners taken were brought before a tribunal, and after some form of trial were put to death. There were cases where the intervention of the priests saved the prisoners, and there were cases where those put to death had been guilty of great cruelties; but there must have been many cases where no such cruelty could be proved.[3] Similar scenes were enacted at Wexford, where a sea-captain named Dixon, aided by his wife, who was as cruel as himself, succeeded for a short time in establishing a reign of terror. Exaggerating the cruelties of the Protestants, he roused the passions of the people to madness; overawed the governor of the town, Captain Keough, a man of humanity, and with the worst of the mob at his heels he broke open the prisons, and in one day, the 20th of June, put 97 to death. The prisoners were marched to the bridge, their crimes enumerated, and then two men in front and two behind pierced their bodies with pikes and flung them into the sea. Many more would have been thus murdered but for the intervention of a priest, Father Curran, who rushed into the crowd, threw himself on his knees and induced the people to do the same, and then prayed in their name that God would show them the same mercy which they would show to the surviving prisoners.[1]

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[1] Gordon, pp. 154-8. Taylor (p. 135), always prone to exaggerate, puts the rebel loss at "not less than 1000."

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[1] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 219; Lecky, iv. 401.

[2] Gordon, pp. 145-7; Hay, pp. 148-51; Lecky, iv. 394-5; Taylor, pp. 91-99.

[3] Gordon, pp. 166-9.

Thoroughly alarmed at the formidable character of the Rebellion, and dreading that the whole country might be lost if only a French force were landed at Wexford, the Irish Government made great efforts to extinguish the fire which they themselves had set aflame. On the 19th of June, General Needham advanced from Arklow to Gorey, and thence to Oulart Hill; Johnson drove Father Roche from Lacken Hill, and then advanced on the 20th to Bloomfield near Enniscorthy; General Duff came from Newtownbarry to Scarawalsh, where he was joined by Loftus and Dundas, the latter having come from Baltinglass. Lake in supreme command advanced south by the banks of the Slaney, and fixed his headquarters at Solsborough. The rebels from Lacken Hill retreated to Three Rocks; all others except those who garrisoned Wexford abandoned the positions they held and hastened to concentrate their strength on Vinegar Hill. Some of their chiefs proposed on the night of the 20th to fall on Lake at Solsborough, and had this been done, it is not unlikely that he would have been overwhelmed and the whole enveloping movement would have come to nothing. But the proposal was not adopted, and on the 21st the rebel army was attacked. Johnson captured Enniscorthy after an obstinate contest, and then took a leading part in the attack on Vinegar Hill. The rebels were probably more numerous than their opponents, and not less brave, and for nearly two hours they maintained the contest. But against 14,000 trained soldiers under experienced officers, and with an abundance of artillery, they were unequally matched; and they broke and fled towards Wexford, leaving thirteen small cannon to the enemy, and between 500 and 600 dead on the field of battle. The slaughter would have been much greater had not

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[1] Gordon, pp. 180-83; Hay, pp. 202-14; *Jackson's Narrative*; Taylor, pp. 165-71.

Needham failed to come up in time, so that the rebels were able to break through. That same day Wexford surrendered to General Moore, who had advanced from Duncannon, and on the previous day had defeated Father Roche at Fooks Mill.[1]

Meantime there had been partial outbreaks in Antrim and Down. The rebels, led by MacCracken, attacked Antrim on the 7th of June, and with difficulty were driven off after an obstinate contest. A few days later MacCracken was captured and put to death. Another body of rebels took Saintfield and Newtownards; but a third body were defeated with heavy loss at Ballinahinch by General Nugent. Their leader, Monroe, was taken prisoner and executed at Lisburn.[2] Nothing further was done in Ulster. The Government, regularly forewarned of everything by informers, had been able to anticipate the rebels and defeat them; and by defeating those in arms they discouraged others from joining in the rebellion. The character of the insurrection also in Wexford reawakened the Ulstermen's hatred of popery. They would have no share in a cause which was controlled by priests; and such was the change among them, that on the 14th of June 6000 Presbyterians at Omagh volunteered to serve against the Wexford rebels.[3]

The strength of these rebels was now broken, and after the disasters which had overtaken them they divided into two bodies. The larger, under Father John Murphy, passed into Carlow through Scollagh Gap, on the 22nd of June, their design being to rouse Kilkenny. Their passage of the Barrow was disputed near Goresbridge by the Wexford Militia, whom they defeated, many of the militia deserting to them. On the 24th they plundered Castlecomer, but were disappointed at receiving such little support from the colliers there, and turning north into the Queen's County, they were pursued by Sir Charles Askill, who had hurried up from Kilkenny with 1600 men. The rebels retraced their steps, and at Kilcomney Hill in Carlow were overtaken on the 26th by Askill and defeated, with the loss of ten pieces of cannon and 1000 men.

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[1] Gordon, pp. 164-6, 175; Maxwell, pp. 139-40, 144-7; *Sir John Moore's Diary*, i. 295-9.

[2] Lecky, iv. 416-22.

[3] *Ibid.* 415.

Their leader, Father Murphy, was shortly after taken prisoner and hanged at Tullow; the survivors returned to Wexford and dispersed.[1] A small body of only 500 under Perry were proceeding to the Wicklow mountains, but hearing that the garrison of Gorey had just wantonly butchered 50 unarmed and inoffensive peasants near that town, they attacked and defeated them, and in revenge put 37 of the friends of Government to death.[2]

Uniting his force with the Wicklowmen under Garret Byrne, Perry, on the 25th of June, attacked Hacketstown, but he failed to dislodge the garrison, though he burned the town.[3] Byrne, aided by a skilful leader named Holt, continued the struggle, and on the 20th of June defeated the Ancient Britons at Ballyallis with great slaughter, and ten days later a body of 150 yeomen at Ballyrahen Hill near Carlow.[4] A portion of this force now returned to Wexford and dispersed; another portion under Aylmer maintained the fight in Wicklow and Kildare; while a third body under Fitzgerald, Perry and Father Kearns marched through Kildare, Meath and Louth, and then back through Dublin to Kildare. Their hope was that the counties through which they passed would have risen, but in this they were disappointed. Their encounters with the enemy had been frequent, their sufferings great, their strength gradually diminished; and when they reached Kildare, in the middle of July, they dispersed to their homes. Fitzgerald returned with them, but Kerans and Perry had been taken prisoners and executed.[5]

Had Lake, after Vinegar Hill, been willing to pardon the rank and file of the rebels, even while punishing the leaders, there is no doubt that the surrender of Wexford would have ended the war. But he would make no distinction between the leaders who had planned the Rebellion and those who had been forced into it; between men like Keough who had acted with humanity and savages like Dixon. When Father Roche, seeing the futility of further resistance, came in from Three

[1] Cloney, pp. 81-87.
[2] Gordon, pp. 190-92.
[3] *Ibid.* 205-7.
[4] *Ibid.* 209-11.
[5] Teeling, pp. 276-83.

Rocks to Wexford to offer terms of surrender, he was set upon by the soldiers, kicked and beaten beyond recognition, and then hanged at Wexford Bridge. In the same place were executed Captain Keough, Harvey, John Kelly and an old gentleman named Grogan, who walked with crutches to the gallows. The bodies were thrown into the river, the heads being cut off and placed on pikes over the court-house door, Mr. Kelly's head having been first kicked through the streets by the soldiers.[1] Elsewhere the same savage spirit was shown. After Kilcomney Hill, Asgill slaughtered the inoffending peasants as well as the rebels. In Gorey nine bodies of those slaughtered by the soldiers were found half-eaten by pigs. Destruction of property, burning of houses and of Catholic churches were common. The Hessians acquired an infamous notoriety for these plunderings, and the Hompesch dragoons for their outrages on women.[2] There was no law but martial law. The conversation even at the Viceregal table was all about hanging, shooting and burning, and special delight was shown at the news that a priest had been put to death. And, strangely enough, the only one in high office who showed humanity and moderation was Lord Clare.[3]

This was the condition of Ireland when, on the 20th of June, Camden left Dublin and was succeeded as Viceroy by Lord Cornwallis. Without any desire to shield the guilty, Cornwallis disapproved of the lawlessness and violence of the soldiery, and thinking it better to have justice tempered with mercy, he issued a proclamation, early in July, authorizing generals to grant pardons to those who laid down their arms, forsook their leaders, and took the oath of allegiance. A fortnight later an Act was passed granting an amnesty to all rebels but a few. Lake was superseded at Wexford by General Hunter, a kindly and humane man; and it was ordered that no sentence of a court-martial should be carried out until the evidence had first been submitted to the Government at Dublin. Under the influence of these milder measures, Fitzgerald, Aylmer and Barret and Garrett Byrne surrendered and were pardoned; Hackett degenerated into a leader of a predatory band and was killed in November; and though Holt still held out in Wicklow, he also soon surrendered, and was transported to New South Wales.[1]

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[1] Hay, pp. 238-40.

[2] *Ibid.* 234-5.

[3] *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 355-8, 369.

In Dublin, meanwhile, a High Commission court was trying the United Irish Directory; and to ensure conviction the informer's aid was invoked. Armstrong succeeded in bringing the two Sheareses to the scaffold, and Reynolds helped to convict MacCann, Byrne and Bond. MacCann was hanged on the 19th of July; the execution of Byrne was fixed for the 25th, and that of Bond for the following day. But on the night of the 24th the other State prisoners offered to disclose all about the United Irish conspiracy, and to submit to being banished to any country at peace with England, if only their own lives and the lives of Byrne and Bond were spared. While these overtures were being considered, Byrne was executed and Bond died in prison. The Speaker, Sir John Parnell, and others were against making any terms with the prisoners; but Lord Clare was on the side of clemency, and his influence was so powerful that he carried the day; and in August, before a Committee of the Houses of Parliament, O'Connor, Emmet and Macnevin gave the fullest information, without, however, incriminating individuals, for this was specially stipulated.[2] After an interval, some of the lesser men were sent to Botany Bay, while twenty of the chief men were sent in March 1799 to Fort George in Scotland, where they were detained until 1802.[3] Ultimately both Macnevin and Emmet rose to high positions in the United States, and O'Connor became a general in the French army.

One of the reasons why the State prisoners submitted was that France had sent them no assistance, and apparently never would.[4] Lewins begged hard for 5000 men while Wexford was in arms,[5] but he begged in vain; and now, when the Rebellion was crushed, news arrived in Dublin that a French force had landed at Killala on the 22nd of August. The French Directory were really unable to send a large army, as their resources had been strained by the expedition to Egypt. Their plan was to send small detachments to Ireland, so that the flame of insurrection might be kept kindled until there was time to send a larger force.[1] General Humbert was to sail from Rochelle with 1000 men, General Hardy from Brest with 3000, while General Kilmaine was to have a reserve army of 9000, and was to sail when Humbert and Hardy had made some progress. Co-operation was essential if success was to be gained. But Humbert, impatient of delay, refused to wait, and after compelling the merchants of Rochelle to advance him some money, he sailed from that port and arrived at Killala on the 22nd of August. Neither there nor at Ballina did he meet with any effective resistance, and leaving garrisons at both places, he hurried on to Castlebar, which he attacked on the morning of the 27th of August. General Lake was in supreme command, with General Hutchinson next. The former had arrived only the previous evening. Hutchinson had hurried on from Galway and arrived some days before, and thinking that the French would advance by Foxford, he sent forward a strong force under General Taylor to intercept them; but Humbert, turning to the west, made his way by the mountain road which passed the Windy Gap. His army was little more than 700, and he had only a few horses and two light guns. With him also were about 500 peasants, whom he had armed, but who were of little use in battle. The English had about 1700 men, cavalry and infantry, several pieces of cannon, abundance of supplies, and a position of great advantage on the rising ground north of the town. But their resistance was poor. The guns were indeed well handled, and Lord Roden's cavalry made a stand, as did a few others, at the bridge in the town; the remainder took to flight, and some few of the Kilkenny Militia deserted to the enemy. Many hundreds of prisoners and all the cannon were taken, and the French, entering the town, procured a few horses and pursued the English cavalry, who rode rapidly through the town, nor halted till they reached Tuam. Outside Castlebar, Lord Roden's Fencibles faced about and shot a few of their pursuers dead. The battle is known as the Races of Castlebar, and the place where the Frenchmen fell has ever since been known as French Hill.[1] Humbert endeavoured to organize a government for Connaught; but he was unable to rouse the country round, and abandoned Castlebar on the 4th of September, marching towards Sligo. He was overtaken on the 8th by Cornwallis and Lake, with an army of 20,000 men, and compelled to surrender at Ballinamuck in Longford. The French soldiers were treated as prisoners of war and sent back to France. Their Irish allies were slaughtered without mercy; and Tone and Teeling, two Irishmen who held the rank of French officers, and as such had come from France, were tried by court-martial and hanged.[2]

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[1] *Holt's Memoirs.*

[2] *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 371-81, 384.

[3] *Ibid.* iii. 78.

[4] Madden, iii. 60-61.

[5] Guillon, pp. 359-61.

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[1] Guillon, pp. 368-71.

Eight days after the surrender of Humbert, Napper Tandy and a few followers landed from France at Donegal; but without men or money they could do nothing, and were glad to escape the English vessels, and reached Norway. On the 20th of the same month, Hardy's expedition, with Wolfe Tone on board the *Hoche*, sailed from Brest. Once again the winds favoured England, and the French vessels were separated at sea. Some were attacked and disabled by an English naval force under Admiral Warren, and the *Hoche* and others were captured. Tone was tried by court-martial and sentenced to be hanged, the only request he made being that, as a French officer, he should be shot. When this request was refused he cut his throat in his cell.[3] Before the end of the year Holt surrendered, and the Rebellion of 1798 was at an end.

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[1] Guillon, pp. 380-85; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 409-10; *Stock's Narrative*.

[2] Guillon, pp. 387-8, 396-407; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 2, 11; Teeling, pp. 303-8; Maxwell, pp. 234-6.

[3] Guillon, pp. 407-12.

CHAPTER IV

The Union

WHEN Cromwell became Lord Protector of England in 1653, the Instrument of Government placed the legislative power of Great Britain and Ireland in his hands jointly with a Parliament of 460 members, 400 of whom were English, 30 Scotch, and 30 Irish. Catholics were ineligible to sit in Parliament, or even to vote for its members, and the 30 Irish who sat in the United Parliaments of 1654-1656 and 1658 were either officers of Cromwell's army or his personal friends.[1]

It does not appear that the mass of the Irish Protestants approved of this arrangement, and when the Irish Parliament was restored with the restoration of the Stuarts, no voice in Ireland was raised in protest, and for many years none to favour a legislative Union except Sir William Petty.[2] The Jacobite war, the confiscations which followed, the asserted claim of the English Parliament to legislate for Ireland, and the character of some of its legislation, effected a change. All power was then in the hands of a minority Protestant in religion and English in sympathy, who held possession of confiscated Catholic lands, had driven the Catholics from Parliament, and were oppressing them by penal laws ; and living in the midst of a hostile population, this Protestant minority looked to England alone for a continuance of the privileges and security of their lands. With representatives in a United Parliament they would have the full right of English citizenship, nor would such an assembly prevent the importation of Irish cattle into England, or destroy the Irish woollen trade. It was considerations such as these which prompted Molyneux to wish for a legislative Union as a happiness too good to be hoped for,[1] and the Irish Parliament to petition for it in 1703 and in 1707 as something which would add additional lustre to the Crown.[2]

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[1] Lingard, vol. viii. 202 ; Mountmorres, ii. 243-4.

[2] Lecky, v. 121.

These advances, however, were coldly received, and for more than half a century only the obscure names of Madden and Dobbs were found to renew the appeal of Union. A greater name than these was that of Adam Smith, who thought it but just that Ireland should contribute to the public debt of Great Britain, which to some extent had been incurred on her behalf; who believed that Ireland would gain considerably by a union with Great Britain, and that without such a union "the inhabitants of Ireland are not likely for many ages to consider themselves as one people."[3]

It was said that Lord Rochford refused to accept the Irish Viceroyalty in 1776 unless he were allowed to repeal the penal laws and carry a measure of legislative union, and it is certain that such a union was favoured by the Duke of Rutland,[4] who was Irish Viceroy from 1784 to 1787, and who declared that without a union Ireland would be separated from England in less than twenty years. The action of the Irish Parliament in the questions of the Commercial Propositions and on the regency caused Rutland's views to find favour with many English statesmen, who, like him, began to fear that an independent Irish Parliament was inconsistent with the integrity of the empire. Pitt himself favoured union even in 1792. In the years that followed his opinion on the subject remained unchanged, and when the Rebellion had made Ireland helpless, he seized the opportunity for which he had waited and had no difficulty in obtaining the support of the British Parliament.

In Ireland his task was not so easy, for the century which had passed since the days of Molyneux witnessed a complete change in Irish opinion. Time had softened ancient enmities. Those who fought at the Boyne and Aughrim were long since gone, and a generation lived to whom these fierce contests were but a memory. The gulf that separated Protestant and Catholic had become less. The Parliament which had fashioned the penal code had learned toleration, and, retracing its steps, had repealed the greater part of that same code. The Catholic was still poor, but he could practise his religion without hindrance, possess his property in peace, and though yet debarred from sitting in Parliament, could vote for its members. Ceasing to be a persecutor, the Protestant landlord found his Catholic tenants inoffensive and faithful, and could often count on their passionate attachment. The descendants of Williamite and Cromwellian had come to regard Ireland and not England as their country, and with much of a patriot's pride. It was they who had formed the Volunteer army and made the Irish Parliament free. They remembered that to the English Parliament they owed the destruction of their trade. On the other hand, the Irish Parliament was their own. With all its defects, it had shown public spirit; much of its later legislation was marked by wisdom; its debates were conducted on a high level; not a few of its members were men of ability and even of genius, who would have shed lustre on the first deliberative assembly in the world; and since 1782, when the Parliament became for the first time a reality, the prosperity of the country had advanced with giant strides. In face of these facts, the Irishman who would propose to abolish this Parliament and turn his face to a British assembly would be regarded as a public enemy in Ireland, both by Protestant and Catholic, and even as early as 1785 the Duke of Rutland thought he would stand a good chance of being tarred and feathered if he proposed a union.[1] This was the state of public opinion when the Rebellion of 1798 opened.

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[1] "Case Stated," pp. 97-98.

[2] *Commons' Journal*, iii. 45.

[3] *Wealth of Nations*, p. 757.

[4] Lecky, v. 125-32.

In the Union debates it was often asserted on one side that the settlement of 1782 was a final adjustment, and this was denied as strongly on the other side. And yet, if language has any meaning at all, those who affirmed were right; especially when the settlement of 1782 was supplemented by the Renunciation Act of the following year. But though the British

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[1] *Rutland Correspondence*, iii. 136.

Parliament abandoned its claim to legislate for Ireland, there were some questions that might well have been the subject of further negotiation and exact definition—questions of trade, of foreign policy, of Ireland's contribution to imperial purposes; and had these questions been explicitly settled in 1782, the Irish Parliament might have prolonged its existence, and with advantage both to Ireland and to Great Britain. These questions might have been settled had there not been on the English side a selfish commercial jealousy, and on the Irish a sensitive dread that its newly-acquired rights were being invaded; and in the case of Orde's proposition and again on the Regency Bill these causes operated for evil. The English manufacturers induced Pitt to so modify the commercial propositions that they became less acceptable in Ireland. Grattan regarded them as an attack on the Irish Constitution;[1] compromise and conciliation were wanting, and a great opportunity for a permanent peace was lost. And in the Regency Bill Irish legislators were induced to take the action they did, not for the sake of the Prince of Wales, but rather because they wished to assert their independence.

The consequences were disastrous. Even in their amended form Pitt expected the commercial propositions would have been accepted by the Irish Parliament, and was angry because they had not been; and his anger grew after the dispute on the regency. He had already begun to retract the liberal professions of his earlier years, and horrified by the excesses of the French Revolution, he conceived a disgust for popular rights, and had become a coercionist and a reactionary. Autocratic and overbearing, with the British Parliament subservient to his every wish, he would have no real reform of the Irish Parliament, dreading that such an assembly would clash with the Parliament of Great Britain; and after the events of 1785 and 1789, he gradually drifted to the conviction that the safety of the empire depended on a legislative union. Such a union would undoubtedly have been hindered by the grant of Catholic emancipation, and would be helped by a rebellion; and the charge has been made that Pitt actually provoked the Rebellion of 1798 for the purpose of carrying the Union, a charge which Mr. Lecky thinks too wildly extravagant to require refutation.[1] And yet, let the facts be remembered and the accusation does not appear to be so extravagant. After the hopes raised by Fitzwilliam had been disappointed, Pitt saw that Catholics were deeply mortified, and that large numbers had become United Irishmen. He knew and approved of the illegalities of Carhampton and Lake, of the outrages of the Orangemen, of the stirring up by the Irish Government of religious animosities; and if there was to be no Parliamentary reform or Catholic Emancipation, no redress of admitted and glaring grievances, if corruption and virulence and illegality were to continue, he must have expected that from such causes the effect would be rebellion. The man who deliberately does an evil act is plainly culpable, but so also is he who does something from which an evil act will certainly follow—as between the two the culpability is merely a matter of degree; and if Pitt's guilt in regard to the Rebellion is not of the former character, it is at least of the latter.

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[1] *Rutland Correspondence*, iii. 233.

At what precise period Pitt's colleagues in the Ministry were brought to adopt his views on the Union does not appear; but when the Rebellion of 1798 was over, Pitt himself believed that the moment for action had come. He was able to bend his colleagues to his own imperious will, and Cornwallis, on his arrival in Ireland, was directed to quietly feel his way and ascertain on what extent of Irish support he could rely. Cornwallis himself was a convinced Unionist from the first. Lord Clare, who told the electors of Trinity College in 1782 that "he had always been of opinion that the claims of the British Parliament to make laws for this country is a daring usurpation on the rights of a free people,"[2] was now for a Union, and had even urged his Unionist views on the English Ministry for years. Lord Castlereagh, who as a patriot told the Down electors in 1790 that he loved the cause of the people, and that he revered the Constitution "with that ardour of affection which a youthful heart dictates and which your generous confidence demands,"[1] was now a reactionary and a coercionist, and in complete sympathy with Clare's views. Mr. Isaac Corry, M.P., a patriot for years, had also turned his coat, and so also had Lord Yelverton, Lords Shannon and Ely; Mr. Connolly and Mr. John Beresford were also for Union; and these four, as borough-owners, commanded many votes in Parliament. Lords Kilwarden and Carleton, two judges, were hesitating and doubtful, and so also was Lord Pery, who, as Mr. Sexton Pery, had filled for many years the office of Speaker, while the Duke of Leinster would give no opinion.[2] Some of the Protestants favoured the measure, fearful that if Catholic Emancipation were granted without a Union, Parliamentary reform would follow and give the Catholics an ascendancy in the Irish Parliament; the Protestant landlords especially, dreading such a contingency, trembled for their privileges and their lands. The Catholics, on the other hand, had lost all hope of getting justice from the Irish Parliament, which had shown itself so bigoted and so corrupt, and favoured a Union, as it would free them from Orange ascendancy; and Dr. Troy and Lords Kenmare and Fingal were early on the Unionist side.[3] Finally, the Ulster linen manufacturers, knowing that free trade with Great Britain would enrich them and that a Union would be accompanied by free trade, were in favour of a legislative Union.[4]

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[1] Lecky, v. 145.

[2] O'Flanagan, *Lives of the Irish Lord Chancellors*, ii. 166.

But all this did not foreshadow that a majority in the Irish Parliament, still less outside it, were on the side of Clare and Castlereagh. After all, a few linen manufacturers, thinking only of pecuniary advantages for themselves, did not express the feeling of Ulster Presbyterianism. Dr. Troy and Lords Kenmare and Fingal were not the stamp of men whom the Catholic masses would select to represent them in any political matter. Not all the Protestants thought that there was danger to their privileges or estates from an Irish Parliament, even if a few Catholics were admitted as members. Beresford and Connolly, and Lords Ely and Shannon, would certainly command some votes, but these were only a small proportion of the borough-owners. Corry and Yelverton represented only themselves, and as for Clare and Castlereagh, they could command the full strength of pensioners and placemen, which was a good deal, and they had the resources of Government at their back, but beyond this they could not go.

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[1] *Grattan's Life*, iv. 465.

[2] Lecky, v. 159-60.

[3] Ingram, pp. 85-86; *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 8; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 36, 172.

[4] Lecky, v. 172.

The Government were anxious to obtain a majority, who would vote rather from conviction than from interest, and with the object of convincing the unconvinced, a pamphlet was published in the end of 1798 with the title: *Arguments for and against a Union between Great Britain and Ireland.* It was published anonymously, but it was soon known that its author was the Under-Secretary Cooke, and that it had been published with the sanction and approval of Government, and might be taken as the official statement of the Unionist case. It was an able statement, which omitted no point that could tell, and in turn appealed to every interest. It was a time, Cooke said, which called for a closer union with Great Britain, seeing that both Ireland and Great Britain were equally menaced by the all-devouring ambition of France. Such a Union as was contemplated would end jealousies and rivalries between the two Parliaments; it would end exceptional legislation for either country, as both countries would henceforth be governed by the same code of laws; it would secure Protestants in their lands and privileges, and preserve the Protestant Church from a Catholic ascendancy, which would surely follow from a reform of the Irish Parliament. At the same time, it would leave the Catholics such rights as they already had, obtain Government provisions for their clergy with a commutation of tithes, and leave the door open for further concessions. Such a Union would foster trade by freely admitting Irish goods to all the markets open to Great Britain; it would attract British capital to Ireland, and thus develop her resources; and the example of Scotch Union was advanced to show what advantages such a Union had brought in its train.[1]

It will be seen that much of this was prophecy, and prophecy is not argument, nor did the pamphlet make many converts, but on the contrary helped to disclose the forces of the Opposition. The Bar met in December, and under the leadership of Mr. Saurin a resolution was carried by 166 to 32, declaring that "a legislative Union was an innovation which it would be highly dangerous and improper to propose at the present juncture."[2] The attorneys followed the lead of the barristers. The magistrates and Common Council, with the merchants and bankers of Dublin, expressed their abhorrence of a measure which would deprive the Irish people "of their constitutional right and immediate power of legislating for themselves." The fellows and students of Trinity College called upon their representatives to oppose any such measure; and the gentry and freeholders of Dublin, Westmeath and Galway were equally strong, the Galway men denying the power of the Irish Parliament to vote away the independence of the nation, and describing the Unionists as enemies to their country.[3] Foster, the Speaker, threw the immense weight of his abilities and experience into the Anti-Unionist scale, as did also Sir John Parnell, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and FitzGerald, the Prime Sergeant; and among the lawyers on the same side was every man who shone at the Bar. One of the ablest of them, Bushe, answered Cooke in a pamphlet, *Cease your funning*, and an Anti-Unionist paper was started in Dublin, the chief contributors to which were Grattan, Bushe, Burrowes and Plunkett; the two latter, like Bushe, men of the finest intellect.[4] Lord Ely, the borough-owner, who had been in favour of the Union, now changed sides and told Castlereagh that its only advocates were "men who do not belong to us and absentees who never again intend to visit Ireland."[1] The extent of the opposition disheartened Cornwallis, and early in 1799 he had to confess, to his no small chagrin, that even the Catholics on whom he relied were becoming cautious and distrustful.[2]

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[1] *Arguments for and against a Union Considered* (Fourth edition). Dublin, 1799.

[2] *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 18; *Grattan's Life*, v. 16.

[3] Coote, *History of the Union*, pp. 28-30. Dublin, 1802.

[4] *Plunkett's Life*, i. 114-15, 124.

But Pitt and Portland had put their hands to the plough and were determined not to look back. The latter authorized Cornwallis to assure all those having political influence that the Ministry would press on the Union "as essential to the well-being of both countries, and particularly to the security and peace of Ireland as dependent on its connexion with Great Britain," and that "the conduct of individuals upon this subject will be considered as the test of their disposition to support the King's Government."[3] And when the Irish Parliament met in January 1799, the question of legislative Union was at once raised by the following paragraph in the Viceroy's speech: "The more I have reflected on the situation and circumstances of the kingdom, considering, on the one hand, the strength and stability of Great Britain, and, on the other, those divisions which have shaken Ireland to its foundations, the more anxious I am for some permanent adjustment which may extend the advantages enjoyed by our sister kingdom to every part of the Island. The unremitting industry with which our enemies persevere in their avowed object of endeavouring to effect a separation of this kingdom from Great Britain must have engaged your particular attention, and His Majesty commands me to express his anxious hope that this consideration, joined to the sentiment of mutual affection and common interest, may dispose the Parliaments in both kingdoms to provide the most effectual means of maintaining and improving a connexion essential to their common security, and of consolidating, as far as possible, into one firm and lasting fabric, the strength, the power, and the resources of the British Empire."[4]

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[1] *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 37.

[2] *Ibid.* 28-29.

[3] *Ibid.* 20.

[4] *Plunkett's Speeches*, p. 41.

The conduct of the whole question in the House of Commons, and very largely outside also, was left in the hands of Lord Castlereagh. He had been for a considerable time discharging the duties of Chief Secretary; Pelham, who actually held the office, being absent in England. But in the previous November Pelham resigned, partly because of ill-health, partly also because he did not approve of the Union,[1] and Castlereagh was formally appointed to succeed him. The King did not favour having such an office in an Irishman's hands, but an exception was made in the case of Castlereagh, and for the curious reason that he was so unlike an Irishman.[2] Certainly the kindness, the sympathy, the warmth of heart of the Irishman were not his, for he was cold and callous and heartless; but it would be equally unfair to compare him with an honourable English gentleman, for treachery and duplicity and hypocrisy were among the prominent features of his character. He had completely turned his back on the liberal opinions of his earlier years, and in the terrible years of 1796 and 1797, and during the horrors of 1798, he favoured every severity of Government, condoned every illegality, employed the vilest of men as his instruments—men without a shred of character—the renegade politician, the partisan judge, the perjured sheriff, the spy, the informer, the convicted criminal, the ferocious military officer, the soldier who ravished and burned and desecrated the temple of God. With a graceful person and insinuating manners, he concealed under a plausible exterior a heart black as night, a nature to whom no depth of infamy was too deep. He appeared to love cruelty for its own sake, and to pity was an utter stranger. The open, the candid, the honest among men he hated, because they were so unlike himself; love of country he did not understand; public virtue he despised; bribery and corruption he loved to employ; he walked on the tortuous rather than on the straight road, and could do nothing with clean hands.

Such a man had no difficulty in carrying out the directions of Portland, to consider the support of the Union as the test of loyalty, and immediately Sir John Parnell was dismissed from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and was succeeded by Isaac Cory; FitzGerald's office of Prime Sergeant was given to an obscure barrister named Daly, because he was a Unionist; and Mr. George Knox and Mr. Claudius Beresford resigned their seats on the Revenue Board, knowing that as Anti-Unionists they were certain to be dismissed.[1] Several votes were thus secured by promises of office or threats of dismissal, and these, added to the pensioners and placemen, gave Castlereagh a formidable body of supporters. But the Opposition was also formidable, even in numbers, still more so in ability; and against such men as Knox, Ponsonby, Parnell, Barrington, FitzGerald, Parsons and Plunkett, such men as Blaquiere and the Knight of Kerry, or even Castlereagh himself, were but poorly matched. Mr. William Smith indeed had talent, as had Castlereagh, who on the Address made an able speech. Disclaiming any motive but patriotism and public interest, he at one time pleaded and entreated, and then became menacing and defiant, and when Barrington charged the Government with corruption, Castlereagh jumped to his feet and shouted to have these words taken down. He assured the members that assenting to the Address did not mean assenting to the Union, it was merely a willingness to consider the question. But Parnell moved as an amendment that the Constitution of 1782 should be maintained, and it was on this the debate arose—a debate which began on the 22nd of January and continued without interruption for twenty-two hours.[2]

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[1] Lecky, v. 149-50.

[2] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, i. 424-44.

As might have been expected, such men as Knox, Ponsonby, Parnell and Barrington spoke well; but the most powerful speech of the debate was made by Plunkett, who rose on the morning of the 23rd, just as there came through the windows the first streaks of dawn. Passion and pathos and solemn warning, fierce invective, scathing sarcasm, unanswerable argument, the debating power and constitutional knowledge of a great lawyer and a great orator marked this splendid effort. Repeating the language of Barrington, he challenged the

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[1] Lecky, v. 213.

[2] Barrington, pp. 321-3.

Government to take down his words, but the Government remained silent. He spoke of Castlereagh with contemptuous scorn as "an assuming stripling," a young philosopher who had been transplanted from the nursery to the Cabinet to outrage the feelings and understanding of the country," "a green and sapless twig"—these latter words being especially severe, as Castlereagh was childless. He distinctly denied the right of the Irish Parliament to vote away its own existence; the members were elected to make laws not legislatures. As for himself, he would resist to the last gasp of his existence, and when he felt the hour of his dissolution approaching, he would, like the father of Hannibal, take his children to the altar and swear them to eternal hostility against the invaders of his country's freedom.[1] Some of the trimmers on the Anti-Unionist side who had been meditating desertion were perhaps convinced, or perhaps cowed, by this great speech; and when the division was taken, Castlereagh had only a majority of one, 105 being on the Opposition and 106 on the Government side.

Two days later another long debate arose on the report of the Address, when Parsons moved that the paragraph relating to the Union should be expunged. Parsons and Ponsonby were at their best, and even in so corrupt an assembly their arguments and eloquence had such an effect that the Government was defeated, the Unionists mustering only 106, while there were 111 on the side of the Opposition. Dublin went wild with joy. When the numbers were announced the ladies in the gallery could with difficulty restrain themselves, but outside there was no restraint, and the people shouted themselves hoarse. Ponsonby and his friends when they appeared were greeted with deafening cheers, while the Unionist members were hissed and hooted. The Speaker's carriage was drawn through the streets by an enthusiastic and cheering crowd, bonfires were lighted, houses illuminated, even the Post Office, a Government establishment, was a blaze of light. Those who refused to illuminate their windows had them

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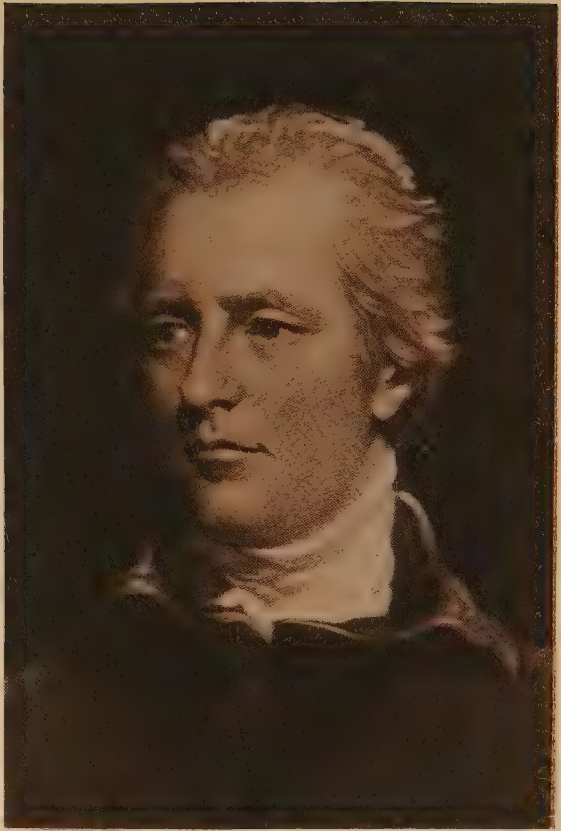
[1] *Plunkett's Speeches*, pp. 41-52.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH

AFTER SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.



WILLIAM PITT

AFTER JOHN HOPPNER

broken; and this happened at the house of Lord Clare, which was attacked by an angry mob.[1]

On the other hand, the Irish House of Lords readily consented to the Address, which was carried by a majority of 52 to 16. Nor had Pitt any difficulty in carrying his Union Resolution in the British House of Commons by 140 to 15, and in the British House of Lords the same resolutions were carried without opposition.[2] Mr. Pitt's speech on the occasion was long and elaborate and eloquent, and delivered with all the authority which comes from a great position and splendid talents. Laying special emphasis on what had taken place, on the Commercial Propositions and on the Regency, he conjured up other visions perhaps of fatal divisions which might arise between two independent legislatures. He ascribed the ills of Ireland to the situation of the country, the ignorance of the people, the division of classes, the state of property, religious distinctions, to "the rancour which bigotry engenders and which superstition rears and cherishes.[3] If the proposed Union could not cure all these ills it would at least, like the patent medicine, cure all that could be cured. It would give Ireland greater security and greater wealth, more extended trade, attract British capital to her shores, bring warring classes together, soften the severity of religious animosities, leave the landlord his property, the Protestant his Church, and to the Catholic would open the door for further concessions.[4] Such a Union was not subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke, but one entered into by free consent, on just and equal terms, binding two great nations which want nothing but that indissoluble connexion to render both invincible." This was again going over the ground covered by Cooke, and in reality contained nothing new. Nor had Sheridan, who led the Opposition, any difficulty in discrediting the case made, though his arguments and his eloquence were in vain.

Less brilliant than Sheridan, the Irish Speaker, Foster, made, in the Irish Parliament, even a more convincing case.

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[1] Lecky, v. 227.

[2] Stanhope's *Pitt*, iii. 177-8.

[3] Gifford's *Pitt*, vi. 143-54.

[4] Stanhope, iii. 173-6.

For many years he had filled in succession the offices of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Speaker, and had filled both with credit. His mental capabilities were solid rather than showy; his knowledge was never superficial; he dug down to the root of things; and in financial and commercial matters, as well as those relating to the Irish Constitution, he spoke with the authority of an expert. In opposition to the patriots he had supported Orde's Commercial Propositions; he was unalterably opposed to Parliamentary Reform and Catholic Emancipation; during the rebellion and the events which led to it he supported every severity and every illegality of Government; and going further even than Clare, when the Rebellion was over he resented with bitterness and indignation the milder measures of Cornwallis. His attitude on public questions augmented the influence which his talents gave him with his fellow-members, for the spirit of the Irish Parliament then was one of ascendancy and bigotry. On such a man, a pronounced and aggressive reactionary, Pitt counted with certainty, and great was his chagrin when he was compelled to reckon with his opposition.

Foster had been prevented by his position from taking part in the earlier debates on the Union; but in May the Opposition, to weaken the Unionist cause, brought in a Regency Bill enacting that henceforth whoever was appointed Regent *de facto* in Great Britain became *de jure* Regent in Ireland. It was when this Bill had reached the committee stage that Foster, no longer in the Chair, stated his views on the Union, and in a powerful and closely-reasoned speech which occupied more than four hours in its delivery.

Relying on experience rather than on prophecy, he recalled how loyal to Great Britain the Irish Parliament had always been. It was loyal long before 1782, when, even with its limited powers, it might have refused to vote the necessary supplies; it was loyal in the days of the Volunteers; loyal when it put down the great Rebellion of the previous year. The Bill before the House would remove any cause of friction between the two Parliaments should a question of regency ever again arise.

As to Orde's Propositions, he contended against Pitt that the difference was commercial rather than constitutional; that these Propositions had been at first unanimously adopted in Ireland and rejected only when English commercial jealousy had made them inequitable and one-sided. And all cause of friction had since been removed by the Irish Parliament when it adopted the English Navigation Act, and followed the British Parliament in recognizing the monopoly of the East India Company in the Eastern Seas. If the Irish Parliament at any future time passed legislation injurious to Great Britain, was it not true that no such legislation could take effect until it passed the Great Seal of England, and could not Great Britain by these means enforce an effective veto? An independent Parliament had brought Ireland, in a few years, an amount of prosperity unexampled in her history. The extinction of such a Parliament would widen the area of disaffection, disarrange trade, increase taxation, and, adding to the number of absentees, would remove many from Ireland who were centres of culture, and thus retard rather than advance the progress of Ireland in civilization.[1]

Whatever effect this able speech had in the Irish Parliament, it had much outside, but it had none in weakening the determination of Pitt and Portland. The Union must be carried. Anything which tended to weaken the case for it must be opposed, and hence the Regency Bill, which granted everything for which Pitt had contended in 1789, was now defeated by Castlereagh. There was to be no measure for the commutation of tithes, nor for the payment of Catholic or Presbyterian clergy, passed in an Irish Parliament, nor was Catholic emancipation to be granted except accompanied by a Union.[2] The Ministry wanted Ireland to share their conviction that a Union was best both for Ireland and the Empire, and though Pitt feared that the progress of conviction would not be rapid, he believed it would come, and perhaps sooner than is now (February 1799) expected.[3] To bring about this desirable event everything was lawful. The borough-owners were to be compensated; those who opposed the Union were to be dismissed from all offices they or their friends held under Government; and to terrorize others it was announced publicly to what these dismissals were due. Those who voted for Castlereagh were rewarded with places and pensions and peerages, or promotions in the peerage.

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[1] Lecky, v. 264-76.

[2] *Ibid.* 246-7.

[3] Stanhope, iii. 177.

Grattan and his friends welcomed the Place Bill of 1793 as a measure for the purification of Parliament, for it compelled each member on being appointed to a Government office to resign his seat.[1] But no distinction was made between lucrative and nominal offices, a fatal omission of which Castlereagh took advantage. For there were members who shrank from supporting a Union which they condemned, but were willing, for some consideration, by accepting some nominal office, to vacate their seats and allow a Unionist to be returned; and by this means above 63 Government supporters were secured. On the other hand, Colonel Cole, M.P., an Anti-Unionist, being ordered abroad to join his regiment, applied for the nominal office of the Escheatorship of Munster, taking care, however, that another Anti-Unionist, Mr. Balfour, would succeed him in Parliament. His request was refused, and thus he was unable to vacate his seat.[2]

Such were the means taken to obtain a Unionist majority in Parliament; nor were there less effective means taken to influence public opinion beyond its walls. Though the Rebellion was over and no fresh Rebellion feared, troops were hurried from England until the army in Ireland amounted to 137,000 men. To put down a partial outbreak of crime, a Coercion Act was passed in June 1799 placing all Ireland at the option of the Viceroy under martial law; and as all Anti-Unionists were considered disloyal, this Act was freely used to put them down. The Government took care to appoint as High Sheriffs strong Unionist partisans, and to place the military at their disposal; while in the case of Anti-Unionist Sheriffs, their authority was flouted and ignored by military

[1] Barrington, pp. 333-4.

[2] *Grattan's Life*, v. 40-41.

officers. In Sligo and Antrim public meetings summoned to petition against the Union were proclaimed as illegal. In the King's County a similar public meeting to be held in the Courthouse was stopped by the High Sheriff at the head of the military, and with two six-pounder guns turned on the Courthouse door.[1]

County meetings in Kildare and the Queen's County were also stopped. And a case is mentioned where a gentleman who addressed a letter against the Union to a Kerry newspaper was taken up as a disloyal man and lodged as prisoner in Kilmainham Jail.

All these methods of influencing public opinion Castlereagh was quite willing to employ, and to have his hands free for such work he prorogued the Parliament in June. But Cornwallis was a more honourable man, convinced indeed that the Union was a good thing, and that Parliament and people ought to be persuaded into it, but shrinking from the employment of dishonourable means to obtain votes or influence opinion. From the first he favoured conciliating the Catholics, thinking it a desperate measure for the British Government to ally themselves in Ireland with a small party of reactionaries and bigots.[2] This small party, disapproving of his milder measures, attributed to him the defeat of the Union in January, and by them he was furiously assailed. Cornwallis himself believed the defeat showed that the country was not ripe for the measure, and suggested that for the present it should be postponed;[3] but his will was overborne by the stronger wills of Pitt and Castlereagh, and he was compelled to go on. It was wearisome work for a man of honour—"dirty business" which it was the wish of his life to avoid. He was bartering and bargaining with men who had no fixed principles, who would acknowledge in April that nothing but a Union could save Ireland, and in May would vote against it; men whom he told his friend Ross he longed to kick rather than court.[4]

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[1] *Grattan's Life*, v. 50-51, 93-95; MacNeill, pp. 126-8.

[2] *Cornwallis Correspondence*, ii. 415.

[3] *Ibid.* iii. 51.

[4] *Ibid.* 89, 100-101.

In pursuance of the same dirty business he made a tour in Munster in August and another in Ulster in October, seeking addresses in favour of the Union, the object being to show that the Opposition were wrong in asserting that public opinion was against the measure. On these journeys, if an address was to be presented, no town was too small to be visited, the signatures of all classes and creeds were eagerly welcomed, and yet the results were poor. In the County of Down only 415 signed for the Union, 17,000 against it; in all Ireland only 7000 petitioned for Union, while 110,000 freeholders were on the opposite side; so that the Anti-Unionists were to their opponents in the proportion of 14 to 1. And this was in spite of bribes and promises, of threats and intimidation, of partisan sheriffs and browbeating landlords, of martial law and prancing dragoons.[1]

The position of the Catholics deserves special notice. The great mass of them did not understand political questions, and while they would gladly have welcomed a commutation of tithes, they were indifferent to the question of Union. Nor did the question arouse any enthusiasm among the more educated of the same creed, unless we except Lords Kenmare and Fingal and a few other cringing courtiers who loved to study the caprices of the Viceroy and bask in the sunshine of Castle favours. The clergy, who had seen their churches burned, their villages laid waste, their people flogged and outraged, their clerical brethren driven into exile or perishing on the scaffold, had lost all hope of redress from an Irish Parliament; but if they could have obtained Emancipation from it they would have preferred it to seeking redress from a foreign Parliament.

Among the Bishops the same views prevailed. One of the ablest of their number, Dr. Moylan of Cork, was a welcome guest at the residence of the Duke of Portland, and was enthusiastic for a Union. Equally enthusiastic, and with a more potent voice in the councils of the Bishops, was the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Troy. His piety, his learning, his administrative capacity were recognized at Rome, and he had been promoted from the See of Ossory to Dublin, and had been for a time also Administrator of the See of Armagh.[1] The bent of his mind was to support authority, even when authority and tyranny were identified; he had a horror of political agitation and popular movements; and though he denounced and excommunicated Whiteboys and Rightboys and Defenders, he had no words of condemnation for the wrongs which called these secret societies into existence.[2] During the dark days of 1798 he ceased not to be a courtier, and was often a visitor at the Castle. The scenes he witnessed made him cautious and even timid, and to a Government clerk we find him apologizing because one of his priests in writing to him called him "My Lord."[3] It is quite certain that in what he did he was honest and sincere, though we read with a shock that he asked for and obtained for his nephew a petty Government office, and this even after 1800, when all the world knew that the Catholic Bishops had trusted and had been shamefully betrayed.[4]

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[1] *Grattan's Life*, v. 50-51; Lecky, v. 314.

Dr. Troy was satisfied, in December 1798, to have the Union pass if it contained no clause barring any future concessions.[5] He was satisfied, in the following February, with the speech of Pitt that at some future time something might be done for the Catholics, dependent, however, on their own conduct and on the temper of the times.[6] And he eagerly welcomed the vague promises of the Irish Government, though unauthorized by Portland, and in return induced all the Irish Archbishops and six of the Bishops to accept, on the appointment of all Irish Bishops, the veto of the British Government, and to notify the nomination of parish priests to Government, giving a certificate of their loyalty.[7] His energies were incessant; but though naturally able to influence many Bishops, and to a lesser extent the priests, the small number of those who petitioned for the Union, part of whom only were Catholics, shows that his success with the laity was not remarkable. The Bishop of Meath would not declare publicly for the Union, nor would his priests, and the laity of the diocese were against it.[1] The Archbishop of Tuam had to confess that his people called him an Orange Bishop in the pay of the Government.[2]

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[1] *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, iii. 399.

[2] *Ibid.* 365, 370-71, 384, 477-8.

[3] *Cornwallis*, iii. 20.

[4] *Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 177-8.

[5] Lecky, v. 204.

[6] Stanhope's *Pitt*, iii. 174-5.

[7] *Spicilegium Ossoriense*, iii. 614.

Mr. O'Connell made his first public speech at a meeting of the Catholics of Dublin (January 1800), and declared amid thunders of applause that they would rather trust to their Protestant fellow-countrymen than lay their country at the feet of foreigners, and that if a Union was to be the alternative of the re-enactment of the penal laws, they would prefer the re-enactment of the penal laws.[3]

Grattan was so enraged at the attitude of Dr. Troy and some of the Bishops and priests that he called them "a band of prostituted men engaged in the service of Government." [4] But if a good many of them, perhaps a majority, were for the Union, it is quite certain that they were not acting from mercenary motives, and that only a small number of the Catholic laity were on the same side, so that Grattan's censures were unjust.

This was the state of things when the Irish Parliament met for its last session in January 1800. Of the 300 members of the House of Commons, as it was then constituted, 116 were placemen; only 128—those from the counties and cities and boroughs with an open franchise—could in any sense be considered as popular representatives, the remaining 172 being returned for close boroughs, nominated by the Crown or private patrons, and, according to the usage of the time, bound to vote as their patrons directed.[5] In such an assembly it was easy for the Crown to obtain a majority, but a bare majority, especially when obtained by bribery and corruption, was insufficient in Mr. Pitt's view; and he wrote privately to Cornwallis not to proceed with the Union unless he could be certain of a majority of at least fifty.[1] This majority was not available at the opening of the session, for there were no less than twenty-five seats vacant, nearly all of which had been specially vacated to let in Unionists. Castlereagh wanted a little time to have these vacancies filled, and hence there was not a word about the Union in the Viceroy's Speech. Sir Lawrence Parsons, however, spoiled this arrangement by moving an amendment, that the Constitution of 1782 should be maintained. Castlereagh opposed the amendment, declaring boldly that the country was now for the Union, and that nineteen counties had petitioned in its favour. A fresh debate followed, lasting for eighteen hours, and in which, though Castlereagh and Corry spoke well, the weight of eloquence and argument was on the opposite side. Indeed, the speeches of Parsons himself, and those of Fitzgerald, Moore, George Ponsonby, Burke and Plunkett, were worthy of the greatest assembly in the world.[2]

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[1] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, ii. 437-8.

[2] *Ibid.* 347.

[3] MacNeill, p. 134.

[4] Ingram, p. 159.

[5] MacNeill, pp. 95-96.

But the great event of the debate was the reappearance of Grattan. With difficulty he had been able to get a seat; with great reluctance he had consented to re-enter Parliament, and he had only yielded to the combined pleadings of the Opposition chiefs and his wife. The close borough of Wicklow had been placed at his disposal by its patron, Mr. Tighe, and a friendly sheriff hastened the return and forwarded the writ to Dublin. He was then in feeble health, as he had been since his return from England in the previous year, and when his friends called at his house in Dublin on the morning of the 16th to take him to the House of Commons, he querulously remarked, "Why don't they let me die in peace?" His wife urged him to go with them, and dressing him in the uniform of the Volunteers, she handed him his loaded pistols. It was not unlikely that some agent of the Government might attack him on his way, and Grattan's friends seemed to expect this; Mrs. Grattan nevertheless remarking that even so he should go, and that he could have no nobler ending than to shed his blood for Ireland.[1]

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[1] Barrington, p. 357.

[2] Coote, pp. 298, 313; *Grattan's Life*, v. 78-88.

He entered the House leaning on the arms of Mr. W. B. Ponsonby and Mr. Arthur Moore, and having taken the oath, he proceeded to make one of the greatest speeches of his life. Every point that could tell was made with the skill of an old Parliamentary hand. And the effect was heightened by the circumstances in which the speech was delivered. Grattan was so weak that he was unable to stand, and had to obtain the permission of the House to speak seated. His sharp features had become sharper and thinner, his body was wasted by disease and suffering, his head was bowed, the light in his eye had grown dim, his voice was almost inaudible. But even in such difficulties genius asserted itself, mind triumphed over matter. Back again in the scenes of his old triumphs, he recalled the events in which his had been the central figure. From his side some of the old friends were gone, but some were with him still ; while before him were those who had traduced him and sought to sacrifice his life, and these same men were now laying violent hands on the temple which his genius had reared. After the first few sentences he gathered strength, his voice became resonant, his head was thrown back, the light of battle was in his eye. The foes who had assailed him were now assailed, their prophecies derided, their arguments proved fallacious, their fictions exposed, and the methods by which the Union was sought to be carried condemned with an energy of invective, a wealth of epithet, a severity of satire, which cast even the great efforts of Bushe and Plunkett into the shade.[2] It was all in vain. Castlereagh had carefully marshalled the forces of corruption, and when the division was taken the Government had 138 supporters, while only 96 were on the side of Grattan.[3]

The House adjourned to the 5th of February, and on that day Castlereagh brought his plan of Union definitely before Parliament. Instead of appointing Commissioners, as had been

[1] *Grattan's Life*, v. 76-77.

[2] *Speeches*, pp. 235-46.

[3] Coote, pp. 314-30 ; *Grattan's Life*, v. 88-91 ; Barrington, pp. 372-4.

done in the case of the Union with Scotland, he submitted his scheme in the form of articles or resolutions, which were to go through the various stages in both Houses of Parliament, then go through the British Parliament, and when returned be embodied in a Bill.

In introducing his plan, Castlereagh's speech was necessarily long, and in part dry and tedious. There was to be one State, one Parliament, one Church, for it had been agreed on as a fundamental article that the Protestant Church was to be maintained. Taking the imports and exports and the principal articles of consumption for three years, he arrived at the taxable capacity of Ireland for imperial purposes, and fixed it to that of Great Britain as two to fifteen, this to continue for twenty years, when it might be revised in the United Parliament. The debts of the two countries were to be separate, but if at any time they became extinguished, or were brought within the proportions of two to fifteen, they were to be amalgamated. The Imperial Parliament was henceforth to be the taxing authority, but with the proviso that no article in Ireland was to be taxed higher than the same article in Great Britain. Irish revenues were to form a consolidated fund, any surplus remaining, after expenses of government and imperial contribution, to be used in relief of taxation, or for local purposes. The Commercial Articles approximated to those of 1785. The manufactures of each country were to be exported to the other, duty free, though the bounties already paid on Irish linen were to remain, and also those on flour, grain and malt, though only for a period of twenty years. No higher import duty than 15½ per cent was to be imposed on British manufactures, nor was this to last beyond twenty years; and meanwhile countervailing duties might be imposed in either country on articles subject to internal imposts.

The charges on the re-exportation of native, foreign and colonial goods were to be the same in both countries, and no drawbacks were to be retained on articles exported from either country to the other. The Irish courts of law were to remain untouched. As to the representation of Ireland in the United

Parliament, there were to be in the Upper House 4 spiritual and 28 temporal peers, and in the House of Commons 100 members, 2 for each county, 2 for Trinity College, and 34 for the cities and boroughs. Nomination boroughs were abolished, but their patrons were to be compensated.[1]

With much ingenuity Castlereagh combated the contention of Foster, that the Union would lead to additional taxation; on the contrary, Ireland was making an excellent bargain and taxation would be less. The trading and commercial clauses being so advantageous, he thought himself entitled to the gratitude of Irish manufacturers. Making the permanence of the Protestant Church a fundamental article was meant to attract the support of that Communion, and he knew that many of them were hostile or lukewarm. The lawyers, who feared that the courts would be transferred to London, were glad to see by the arrangement made that their fears were dispelled. The county interest were pleased that the number of county members was to be continued, for they feared a diminution under the Union, and the patrons of the nomination boroughs being so generously compensated could not with any justice complain.

This speech had perhaps some influence on public opinion, but in obtaining votes much more was done by the bribery and corruption which continued to be employed. No less than sixty-three seats had been vacated in the interests of the Union by acceptance of the Escheatorship of Munster.[2] Martial law continued, military officers at the head of their troops paraded the streets of Dublin, and a barrack was erected at Foster Place as if to overawe Parliament itself. Ten thousand of the Irish militia were induced to go to England, and were replaced by an equal number of English militia. Petitions for the Union were sought with avidity,[3] while the Opposition were prevented by force from seeking to petition, and Lords Downshire and Charlemont and Mr. Ponsonby, who issued a circular on behalf of thirty-eight county members of Parliament, asking the various counties to convene meetings, were assailed as if they had been guilty of high treason; and Lord Downshire was dismissed from all the offices he held, and his name erased from the list of the Privy Council.[1] A duelling club was set up among the Unionist members, each of whom was to pick a quarrel with some Opposition member, and so have a chance of shooting him down.[2] The whole patronage of the Government in the Army, the Law, the Church, the Civil Service was unsparingly used for corruption. Everything was offered to the chiefs of the Opposition—to Bushe, Burrowes, Hardy, Saurin and Plunkett; and Bushe declared that he was staggered at the magnitude of the offers made him.[3] Everywhere the process of bribery went on, and even while the debates in Parliament were proceeding, votes were being bought and sold.

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[1] Coote, pp. 333-63.

[2] *Grattan's Life*, v. 130.

[3] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 222, 228-9.

Great efforts were also made by the Opposition. In spite of the Government, meetings were held to petition, and 110,000 signatures were obtained.[4] A fund of £100,000 was raised to purchase votes, and more than one vote was purchased. Burrowes and Saurin and Gould were thus bought, and added much to the debating power of the Opposition.[5] Outside Parliament, Burrowes proposed that an appeal should be issued to the Yeomanry, declaring that no Government would force a measure through against the wishes of 60,000 armed men;[6] but Grattan and others opposed this motion, which if it had been carried and acted upon might have prevented the Union.[7]

In many speeches the Opposition leaders met effectually the points made by Castlereagh,[8] while Foster in Committee attacked the whole scheme with all his well-known ability, and made a great impression.[9] It was on this occasion that Corry made a coarse and virulent attack on Grattan, calling him an

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[1] *Cornwallis*, iii. 170-71; *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 241.

[2] Barrington, pp. 358-9; *Grattan's Life*, v. 129.

[3] *Grattan's Life*, v. 115.

[4] Lecky, v. 354, notes.

[5] *Grattan's Life*, v. 71-72.

[6] *Ibid.* v. 67-69.

[7] *Cornwallis Correspondence*, iii. 167-8.

[8] Coote, pp. 363-80.

[9] Lecky, pp. 388-95.

"unimpeached traitor." But by this time Grattan had quite recovered his strength, and overwhelmed Corry in a torrent of invective scarcely ever equalled in any Parliament. A duel followed, in which Corry was wounded, and Grattan in consequence became more powerful and more popular than ever.[1]

The position of the Unionists was not improving. Such men as Daly and Fox and Smith and Brown, or even Castlereagh, though able, were much inferior in ability to the Opposition chiefs; as for the rest of the Unionists, they were "mercenaries, soldiers, bravos and bullies."[2] After the duel between Grattan and Corry, they wished for no more duels; some of them attended Parliament irregularly; twelve of them went over to the Opposition,[3] with the result that after all the vacant seats had been filled, the Articles of Union were carried only by 158 to 115, just one more of a majority than that by which Parsons' amendment had been defeated. Cornwallis was despondent; Castlereagh continued bribery, and got ready cash for the purpose from London. But he had no hope of making converts, and only hoped that his followers would keep together.

His hopes were fulfilled. Ponsonby's motion on the 4th of March to send the Anti-Union petition to England was defeated by a majority of 52, Parnell's motion for a dissolution by a majority of 46, and in subsequent divisions, while the majority rarely went beyond 50, it never fell below 40.[4] By the end of March the Union Articles, having passed both Houses, were forwarded to England and passed through the British Parliament with enormous majorities. With some slight alteration in the Church Articles,[5] they came back in May, the Irish Parliament, which had been prorogued for six weeks, again assembled, and the Articles embodied in a Bill rapidly passed the House of Commons and reached the final stages early in June. In these final stages the Opposition relaxed their efforts, feeling that they were fighting a losing battle, but Castlereagh remained to the last at his post.

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[1] *Grattan's Life*, v. 99-109.

[2] *Ibid.* v. 160.

[3] Lecky, p. 371.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 396-8, 402.

[5] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 294-5.

In the House of Lords, on the contrary, the Opposition at no time was effective, and Lord Clare had an easy task. Once only, on the 10th of February, when first introducing the resolutions, he made a long speech, and then he spoke for four hours. As might have been expected, it was filled with rancour and venom, contained much perverted history, many false statements, much denunciation of the Opposition, whom with great effrontery he foully charged with corruption and sedition; and throughout he manifested a bitter hatred of Grattan, of Catholicity, and of all reform.[1] He had but a feeble opposition to contend with, and the Bill when it subsequently came up from the Commons passed its various stages rapidly. Finally, on the 1st of August, it received the Royal assent.

During the Unionist debates, the case of the Scotch Union was often appealed to, and it was argued that a Union was as necessary for Ireland as for Scotland, and would work equally well. But between the two cases it was points of difference rather than of agreement that could be found. The Scotch asked for Union, the Irish did not, but had it forced on them from England; the Scotch Parliament refused to follow England in her wars, the Irish Parliament never refused; the Scotch Parliament by the Act of Security refused to recognize the Hanoverian succession; the Irish only quarrelled on the question of the Regent, and then only as to the extent of his powers; the Scotch Parliament was elected after having the question specially submitted to the electors; not a whisper of Union was heard in Ireland at the General Election of 1797, and the demands of the Anti-Unionists for a dissolution were rejected; Scotland being poor made a good bargain in matters of trade and taxation and prospered after union; Ireland being then rich made a bad bargain and declined in wealth; finally, the Scotch Union was carried without bribery, if we except about £8000 which was paid in arrears of salaries from the

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[1] Coote, pp. 381-411.

English Exchequer, and nothing was paid in respect of her close boroughs;[1] in Ireland nearly one million and a half was paid the borough-owners and levied off Ireland herself; and the bribery of members of Parliament was naked and unashamed. And the letters of those engaged in Unionist negotiations—those of Clare and Portland and Wickham and King and Taylor and Littlehales and the Knight of Kerry, and some of Cornwallis's too—were destroyed lest the extent of their infamy should be revealed.[2]

When bribery had been so lavishly used, it is little wonder that the Union passed, especially when we consider that the Irish Parliament had been always corrupt; that many of its members were placemen and English, caring little for Ireland, but much for the wishes of an English Minister; and that a large majority of the whole House of Commons were never brought into touch with the people by popular elections, and therefore cared little for popular views. Had the eloquence of the patriot party in the years that followed 1782 been supported by an armed force, there can be little doubt that further concessions would have been made, and that a reformed Parliament with an executive dependent on it would have followed the grant of legislative independence; and in the dark days of 1800, when the Irish Constitution was subverted, Grattan must have often bitterly reproached himself with having joined those who demanded that the swords of the Volunteers should be laid aside.

Nor was his sweeping condemnation of the Catholic clergy quite just, for though it is certain that if they had unitedly opposed the Union, the Union would not have passed,[3] it is at least probable that a majority of them did not favour the views of Dr. Troy. And it was hard to expect that the Catholics—either clerical or lay—would willingly take sides with a virulent bigot such as Mr. Foster. To the last the Anti-Unionists, by not agreeing to be liberal to the Catholics, failed to attract their support, and in consequence failed to make the opposition to the Union a national struggle. One member, Mr. Ogle, declared that he opposed the Union because he feared it would lead to Catholic emancipation.[1] Saurin, a descendant of French Huguenots, seemed to have the Edict of Nantes ever before his eyes,[2] and many others were equally intolerant.

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[1] Hill Burton's *History of Scotland*, vol. viii. pp. 91, 93-94, 123, 149, 185.

[2] Preface to *Cornwallis Correspondence*. The Report of the Speeches against the Union was burned by the printer, he having been bribed by the Government (*Grattan's Life*, v. 179-80).

[3] *Grattan's Life*, v. 58-59. Twenty-five M.P.'s determined to oppose the Union if Catholics were against it; but having been assured by Cornwallis that the Catholics favoured it, they withdrew their opposition.

Grattan was on safer ground when he maintained that the Irish Parliament could not vote away its existence, especially without a dissolution having taken place. For the members had not been elected on the question of Union, and they were surely bound on a measure of such magnitude to consult the electors from whom they derived their power. However, the Union passed; a corrupt assembly came to an end; the Great Seal of Great Britain was destroyed and a new one of the Empire took its place; and with the assembling of the United Parliament on the 22nd of January 1801 a new chapter in the chequered history of Ireland was begun.

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[1] *Grattan's Life*, v. 95

[2] *Ibid.* v. 121.

CHAPTER V

The Catholic Question

PROPHECY was much used on both sides in the Union debates, and when the Union was passed there must have been some anxiety to see which class of prophets would be justified by events. If, as Foster contended, a Union would encourage absentees, ruin important manufactures and increase taxation, it was certainly an evil ; but if, as Castlereagh predicted, it would help the linen and woollen manufactures, lighten taxation and lessen religious animosities, then it was a blessing, the offspring of wisdom and patriotism. Time, however, is necessary to test the value of prophecy, and some years must elapse before a final judgment could be pronounced between the contending prophets. And meantime the engagements entered into by Government should be met.

There was no difficulty about the Act giving compensation to the amount of £1,260,000[1] to the borough-owners. It was passed in the Irish Parliament itself, and by the same means and the same majority as carried the Union ; and compensation was given to the opponents as well as to the supporters of Government. There was more difficulty about the promised peerages and places. While the debates in Parliament were proceeding, Cornwallis had a free hand, and could promise titles in abundance if only he could get Parliamentary support in return. He informed the British Ministry of the engagements he was making, nor did they object. But when the Union was passed, Portland complained of the excessive amount of peerages, and of the difficulty of even obtaining the

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[1] *Cornwallis*, iii. 323

King's consent to conferring them, and he more than insinuated that these promises had been recklessly given.[1] With great bitterness Cornwallis complained that he was disgraced before the world in having his engagements repudiated by the Ministry, and he asked to be relieved of his office.[2] Castlereagh was equally pained and equally indignant. If the Viceroy was to be sacrificed after having bought out for the Crown "the fee-simple of Irish corruption," it was sorry treatment, one result of which would be that those disappointed would be sure to publish to the world the profligacy of the means by which the Union had been carried.[3] Ultimately the Ministry gave way, and twenty-two Irish peers were created, five Irish peers received English peerages, and twenty received higher titles.[4]

Those promised pensions and places fared worse than the peers. Cornwallis, on leaving Ireland, had to complain that in many cases his promises as to places and pensions were still unfulfilled. Under the government of his successors the expectants were still expecting their reward, and their unfulfilled claims caused embarrassment to Lord Hardwicke.[5] But some of them remained still expecting until the Tories left office in 1806, and then their claims on the Government were repudiated for ever.[6]

The case of the Catholics was the worst of all. It is true that Pitt's language on the subject in public had been always studiously vague, and that in the House of Commons he refused to give a specific pledge.[7] Nor did Castlereagh in the Irish Parliament, though he avowed it to be the intentions of Government to make some provision for the Catholic clergy, even while he repudiated with indignation the charge of having bribed them to support the Union.[8] Through his whole term of office Cornwallis favoured Emancipation, and with Castlereagh had negotiated with the Catholic leaders. Pitt was sanguine that after the Union the Catholics would obtain political rights, and viewed this prospect without alarm; and probably he would have been more decided in his views had not the sinister influence of Lord Clare been brought to bear on him.[1] His whole Cabinet authorized Cornwallis in 1799 to inform the Catholics of their desire for concession, and a positive assurance that a measure of Emancipation would be introduced into the Imperial Parliament would have been given them, but that it was considered just then inexpedient in view of the danger of arousing Protestant prejudice and alienating Protestant support.[2] It was because of this information Catholic support had been obtained for the Union; and when the United Parliament opened its doors in 1801 the expectations of the Catholic body ran high. Great was their disappointment to see that nothing had been said about Emancipation in the King's Speech, and greater still when Pitt, and with him Lords Grenville, Spencer and Camden, as well as Dundas and Wyndham, had resigned their places in the Ministry without anything having been done. Asked for his reasons for this step, Pitt answered in Parliament in language which was guarded but well understood to mean that he and his colleagues had thought that Emancipation was a necessary sequel to the Act of Union and should at once be brought before Parliament by Government; but that as the King was unalterably opposed to their views, they had determined to resign the offices they held, feeling that they could no longer hold office consistently with their duty and their honour.[3] Cornwallis also on Pitt's behalf assured the Irish Catholics that the blame rested on the King, whose hand could not be forced; that they might rely on the friendship and even zeal of the retiring Ministers; that Pitt himself would do his utmost to establish their cause in public favour, and prepare the way for its ultimate success; that to strengthen his hands the Catholics should be patient and loyal, and that by a contrary course of conduct their cause would certainly be imperilled. Cornwallis, who evidently believed Pitt to be sincere, had papers circulated among the Catholic leaders emphasizing the sacrifice which Pitt and his colleagues had made, and pointing out that with such powerful friends on their side the triumph of emancipation could not be long delayed.[1] As for himself, he could not continue to hold office under Pitt's successor, Mr. Addington, who had come into power pledged to resist Emancipation, and he assured the Catholics that neither he nor Pitt would ever again serve the King unless Emancipation was granted.[2] He noted with satisfaction that his advice and exhortations had been well received by Dr. Troy and Lord Fingall,[3] and so informed Lord Castlereagh.

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[1] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iii. 321-2, 333, 345.

[2] *Ibid.* 324-6.

[3] *Ibid.* 331-3.

[4] MacNeill, p. 110.

[5] *Colchester's Diary*, i. 321-6 (Hardwicke to Addington).

[6] Lecky, v. 305.

[7] *Castlereagh*, iii. 286.

[8] Speech, Feb. 1800.

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[1] Lecky, v. 156-7, 219.

[2] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 8-12.

[3] *Annual Register*, p. 129.

Their faith in Pitt and his promises was more generous and more childlike than that held by the Opposition in Parliament. The latter knew him better; and they believed that his professed friendship for the Catholics was humbug, that he meant nothing, and that after making a mock battle he would return to power and leave them in the lurch.[4] Time proved the correctness of this view. Pitt knew well how deep-seated was the bigotry of George III. He knew that he had been opposed to the concession of 1793; that he had in 1798 directed Cornwallis to be informed of his wish that there should be no indulgence given to the Catholics;[5] that in the following year he objected to any payment of the Catholic clergy;[6] that he had assented to the Union in the hope that it would for ever shut the door to any further measures with respect to the Roman Catholics;[7] and that under the mischievous influence of the English Lord Chancellor Loughborough he had persuaded himself that to admit a few Catholics to Parliament, and to the higher offices, for this is all that was asked, would be to violate his Coronation Oath.[8] Yet Pitt kept the knowledge of these things from Lord Cornwallis, and allowed him to indulge Catholic hopes so as to purchase Catholic support. Had he been in earnest he would have privately remonstrated with the King; he would have argued with him and persuaded him; failing this, he would have threatened to resign. And if he had done this, obstinate as the King was, he would have given way. No Government to which Pitt was opposed could have lived, and this the King knew well. He was indeed tenacious as any Englishman could be; he was cunning and could read the signs of the times; but his intellect was of a common order, and little fitted to cope with the mighty intellect of his great Minister, and in a contest between the two the royal will must have been overborne in the clash of contending wills.

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[1] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 34-41.

[2] Plowden, i. 138.

[3] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 49-50, 72-73.

[4] *Ibid.* 60-61.

[5] Stanhope's *Pitt*, Appendix 16.

[6] *Ibid.* 18.

[7] *Ibid.* 29.

[8] *Ibid.* iii. 264-75.

The real reason why Pitt resigned was that the nation, sick of a war which had more than doubled the National Debt,[1] and had only aggrandized France, wanted peace, and Pitt was too proud to make terms with Bonaparte. As for Emancipation he cared nothing. With his full assent, his personal friend Addington became Prime Minister—a man with the same character of intellect as the King and just as bigoted. Instead of opposing, Pitt supported Addington's measures; he never raised a finger to help the Catholics, nor uttered a word to give them hope;[2] and when the peace with France, which came with the Treaty of Amiens, was broken and the terrible struggle was renewed, he brushed Addington aside with contempt and assumed the reins of power. In 1801 George III. had one of his intermittent fits of insanity, and when he recovered blamed Pitt and the Catholics for his illness; and now (1804) Pitt returned to power, pledged never again to raise the Catholic question, whether in or out of office, during the lifetime of the King. Assuredly those were right who said he was only deceiving the Catholics, and that he would return to power leaving them in the lurch. But the Catholics, it might be said, had their revenge, for Pitt's days were numbered, and those days were wrapped in gloom. His subserviency to the King's prejudices lost him the support of such able men as Fox and Grenville, and left him with colleagues unequal to the great offices they filled. His friend Lord Melville, the Dundas of earlier days, on the shameful charge of appropriating public moneys, had been deprived of all his offices, struck off the Privy Council, and impeached. His great antagonist Bonaparte, with far greater power than was ever wielded by Charlemagne, had become Napoleon, Emperor of the French. The victories of Lake and Wellesley in India, and still more the brilliant victory of Trafalgar, were certainly events of which both the nation and Minister might be proud. But, on the other hand, all the efforts of both nation and Minister against France had failed;. the capitulation of Ulm and the victory of Austerlitz made Napoleon master of Continental Europe, and amid the smoke of battle and the blaze of victory Pitt's coalitions and combinations vanished like a dream. The great Minister died broken-hearted in January 1806, little regretted by large masses of Englishmen, but regretted least of all by the Irish Catholics, whom he had shamefully betrayed.

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[1] Plowden, i. 6.

[2] Ashbourne's *Pitt*, p. 305.

During this period Irish Chief Secretaries succeeded each other in rapid succession. Mr. Abbott succeeded Lord Castlereagh in 1801. Mr. Wickham held the office from the beginning of 1802 to the end of 1803; Mr. Evan Nepean to the beginning of 1805; and Mr. Vansittart from the latter date to the death of Pitt; but none of these gentlemen did anything remarkable, or indeed was capable of doing such. During the whole period Lord Hardwicke was Viceroy—an honourable English Protestant but no bigot, suave, courteous, conciliatory, the tool of no party in Ireland, and the same to all. Under his rule the guilty were punished, the peaceful protected, Orange intolerance was discouraged, and with such good results that Ireland was at peace. One of his greatest troubles was in respect to the Union engagements. Day after day he was pestered with demands for places in the Civil Service, for pensions, for promotions in the Army places on the bench, preferments in the Church;[1] and the applicants were sometimes so persistent that we find him—apparently almost in despair—writing on the repeated application of Mr. James Knox: "The Lord deliver me from Mr. James Knox, Ranger of Kildare!"[1]

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[1] *Viceroy's Post-Bag*, pp. 45-54.

From Lord Clare also he got annoyance, but it did not last for long, for the stormy career of that headstrong politician was drawing rapidly to its close. Accustomed to dominate everything in Irish Government, he complained bitterly that Cornwallis and Castlereagh had negotiated with the Catholics behind his back,[2] and he despised both Hardwicke and Abbot, and to both was insolent and overbearing. To the last he hated Ireland and Catholicity. In the British House of Lords, in 1801, he attacked his countrymen with savage severity; defended the horrors of 1798 in their entirety; advocated perpetual martial law; told the assembled Peers that one of his own servants had been recently murdered, and for no reason but that he was English; that his house was an armoury, and that his servant brought him his arms as regularly as he brought him his hat; that not one Irishman in a hundred cared a jot for Emancipation, but they wanted the abolition of tithes, and every small farmer expected ten acres of land.[3] This series of wanton and wicked falsehoods he uttered for the evident purpose of rousing Anti-Catholic prejudices; but he uttered them to the disgust of the Assembly in which he spoke; and his language must surely have been violent and his conduct vile, when Pitt, who was listening, turned to his friend Wilberforce with the remark, "Good God, did you ever hear so great a rascal!"[4] Returning to Ireland, he died at his Dublin residence in January 1802. A Dublin mob is not usually ungenerous, and insults to the dead are rare among them. Yet such was the execration in which Clare was held that crowds gathered round his house in Ely Place and groaned and hooted as he lay dead.[5] At his funeral there was a continuation of these scenes. The dead Chancellor had once declared that he would make the Irish as tame as cats, and remembering this at the grave-side, the crowd poured a shower of dead cats on his coffin. Thus passed Lord Clare. The Government were delighted, and Mr. Abbott gave expression to their relief.[1] The people exulted that the tyrant was no more, and even now, a century after his death, perhaps no Irishman's name is so execrated in Ireland as that of John Fitzgibbon, Lord Clare.[2]

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[1] *Post-Bag*, p. 219.

[2] *Castlereagh Correspondence*, iv. 50-51.

[3] *Annual Register*, pp. 153-79.

[4] *Grattan's Life*, iii. 403.

[5] Cloncurry's *Recollections*, p. 146.

Another and very different man who disturbed the repose of the Government was Robert Emmet. He was the youngest brother of Thomas Addis Emmet, who played so prominent a part in the rebellion of 1798, and who, in 1801, after an imprisonment of three years, had been released from Fort George. For his connexion with the United Irishmen, Robert, then in his twentieth year, had been expelled from Trinity College. He was sent on a mission to France by what remained of the United Irish Executive; but the Peace of Amiens cut off hope of French assistance, and Robert, returning to Ireland, devoted his time and talents to the business of tanning. His tastes were ill suited to such business, and when his father died in 1803, leaving him a sum of £3000, he resolved to overturn the British Government in Ireland and set up an Irish republic. He was a poet and a singularly gifted orator, and poets and orators make bad conspirators, and yet in the secrecy with which he worked and outwitted the Government he equalled the most seasoned conspirator. Quigley, a bricklayer, Stafford, a baker, Michael Dwyer, who still maintained a desultory warfare among the Wicklow Hills—these were his trusted advisers in Dublin; while Thomas Russell, the friend of Wolfe Tone, looked after the counties of Antrim and Down.

To collect arms and manufacture explosives two depôts were set up in Dublin, one in Patrick Street, the other in Marshalsea Lane, off Thomas Street. Emmet himself, who never visited these depôts and was unknown to the workmen employed there, supplied the money to Stafford and Quigley, and these paid the rent of the depôts and the wages of those employed.

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[1] *Colchester's Diary*, i. 278-9.

[2] *Sham Squire*, pp. 196-7.

Kildare and Dublin were partially organized, and Dwyer attended to Wicklow; and Emmet's plan was to gather together on a certain day the men of Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow, distribute the arms collected, then with a rush capture Dublin Castle, and the rest was easy.

An explosion at the Patrick Street depôt killed one of the workmen, and led to the partial disclosure of the conspiracy and the seizure of the stores contained there. It also put the authorities on their guard, and caused Emmet to hasten the opening of the insurrection. Henceforth he lived at the Marshalsea Lane depôt himself, and fixed nine o'clock in the evening of the 23rd of July for the rising. He had about 3000 pikes, 12 cases of pistols, 4 muskets, 18 blunderbusses and some ill-constructed combustibles. Emmet himself had a sword and a uniform of green and gold.

Early on the 23rd of July some of the Kildare men came to the city; but when they saw their youthful leader and the scanty stores they turned home, and warned their fellow-countrymen whom they met to do the same. The Wicklow men failed to co-operate; in Down and Antrim Russell could do nothing; and when Emmet sallied forth from Marshalsea Lane on the evening of the 23rd of July he had little more than a hundred men. His followers disregarded his advice to proceed to Wicklow and join Dwyer, and Emmet, joined by Quigley and Stafford, returned to Emmet's lodgings at Rathfarnham.

Meantime, as the shades of night fell, his divided followers put an officer and a soldier to death, and brutally murdered the Chief Justice, Lord Kilwarden. But they were soon scattered by the military, with the loss of thirty killed and several taken prisoners.[1]

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[1] *Post-Bag*, pp. 269-99; Madden, iii. 317, 349-50; O'Donoghue's *Life of Robert Emmet*, pp. 92-121; *Byrne's Memoirs*, i. 300-301. Byrne highly extols Emmet's plans, and this when Byrne had acquired considerable experience of military affairs.

In what happened subsequently to Emmet tragedy and romance are intermingled. His residence at Rathfarnham was searched by yeomen, who stabbed his servant Anne Devlin with their bayonets, and then half-hanged her in order to extort information; but the heroic girl refused to tell what she knew.[1] In reality Emmet had gone to the Wicklow Mountains, and had he stayed there, might have baffled the Government and escaped from the country. Near Rathfarnham, however, lived one whom he loved as devotedly as he loved Ireland. This was Sarah, a younger daughter of John Philpot Curran. To see her Emmet returned to Harold's Cross, and there he was arrested by Major Sirr and lodged in Kilmainham Jail till his trial on the 19th of September.

He was defended by MacNally, who promptly told the Government everything he learned from his client.[2] He was assailed with violence and venom by Plunkett, who prosecuted for the Crown.[3] But Emmet knew well that no attack could then injure him, and no advocacy save him from his doom. In fact, he called no witnesses, nor allowed his counsel to make a speech; but when asked before sentence by the presiding Judge, Lord Norbury, if he had anything to say, he spoke himself, and with an eloquence which astonished all. His only request was that no one should write his epitaph until his country had effectually broken her chains; his only anxiety was for his friends, and above all for Sarah Curran and for the anguish he knew she would endure. For himself he cared nothing. In the letter he wrote on the night before his execution there is no tremor in the writing, no incoherence in the thoughts; and on the following day he mounted the scaffold with a firm step. He was executed in front of St. Catherine's Church in Thomas Street, first hanged and then his head cut off and held up to the crowd as the head of a traitor.[4]

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[1] *Post-Bag*, pp. 331, 453; O'Donoghue, pp. 139-44.

[2] *Post-Bag*, pp. 401-3, 442.

[3] *Plunkett's Speeches*, pp. 85-96.

[4] *Post-Bag*, pp. 399-412; O'Donoghue, pp. 179-81.

Russell was soon after arrested and executed; Quigley and Stafford were pardoned; Michael Dwyer surrendered and was banished to New South Wales.[1] Rebellion in Ireland had spent itself; the United Irish Society decayed and died; and the people, weary of blood, turned to other and more peaceful ways for the redress of its wrongs.

At no time had Emmet's plan any chance of even partial success. The people were certainly discontented, but their spirits were cowed; the atrocities of 1798 were still fresh in their memories; and they shrank with horror from anything which would again let loose a licentious soldiery armed with all the powers of martial law. The landing of a great French army would, no doubt, have attracted thousands of the peasantry; but this prospect was in the highest degree improbable, for the war in Europe had already shown, and was destined to show still more in the future, that if Napoleon was master on the land, England was no less the ruler of the sea. Prudence and foresight would have taken these things into account before recklessly embarking in rebellion. But Emmet was young and ardent; his enthusiasm ignored stern realities; where experience and age would have paused he rushed heedlessly on, only to find that his visions were unsubstantial and his hopes were but boyish dreams. And yet, though he failed and did harm instead of good, he is the idol of his race. No story in Irish history is better known than that of Emmet and Sarah Curran: the story of how the latter was sad amid surroundings that were gay; of how she pined and drooped like a lily on its stalk, in a foreign and sunny land, and then came back to Ireland to die. The Irish maiden still mourns her lot, and with moistened eyes still sings those wailing notes which have been wedded to words by the genius of Moore. With millions of Irishmen Emmet's speech from the dock has been the gospel of Irish nationality. It has been quoted from platforms and declaimed from the stage; it has furnished texts for speeches from the dock; it has consoled men in their prison cells; it has filled their thoughts as they mounted the scaffold. On the whitewashed walls of every Irish peasant's home, beside the pictures of the Pope and of O'Connell, there is another that is familiar to us all. It is that of Emmet in his white trousers and vest, his Hessian boots, his coat of green and gold, his military cloak, his cocked hat in his hand, his face spiritualized by enthusiasm, his eyes filled with the light which has never shone upon land or sea. Wherever the Irish race has gone it is the same, and abroad or at home the name of Emmet is one with which to conjure. And if a time should ever come — and who can foresee the destinies of nations?—when Ireland would emerge into the full light of freedom, from the ends of the earth a scattered race would send its help to erect that monument which is still unthought of and to write that epitaph which is still unwritten.

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[1] *Post-Bag*, pp. 421-41.

By the meaner spirits among the Protestants an attempt was made to connect the Catholics with the Rebellion. But the attempt failed. The Catholics were certainly disgusted that so far nothing had been done for them, and that instead of granting concessions the British Parliament had continually suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, and in 1801 had put the country under martial law. And they were irritated in 1803 by the conduct of the Lord Chancellor, Redesdale, who in appointing Lord Fingal a magistrate took occasion to animadvert severely on the Catholics, and to declare that their clergy taught neither loyalty nor charity.[1] A nobleman of stainless character and ancient name might and ought to have vigorously replied to this newly-promoted lawyer, whose letters—for there were several—were a curious compound of bigotry and insolence. But Fingal meekly accepted the rebuke administered to his religion, and he and others after Emmet's insurrection hastened to present an address of loyalty to the Viceroy.

In 1805 he and others for the first time for years bestirred themselves and prepared a petition to Parliament, which they

[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 575-84.

first took to Pitt. To their surprise that Minister refused to support it, and told them he would even oppose it, as in fact he did, when it was presented by Lord Grenville in the Lords and by Fox in the Commons. Grenville was beaten by nearly four to one; Fox by 336 to 124. On this occasion Grattan made his first appearance in the Imperial Parliament. Till then he had obstinately resisted all solicitations to enter that assembly, and only in 1805, under the strongest pressure and in the hope that he might be useful to the Catholics, did he give way. He was returned for Lord Fitzwilliam's close borough of Malden in Yorkshire, and on Fox's motion fully maintained his great reputation, placing himself at once among the greatest orators in Parliament. If argument and eloquence could have prevailed, his speech, and those of Fox and Wyndham, should have carried the day; but the opposition of Pitt was fatal, and the motion was lost.[1]

The next year the prospects for the Catholics brightened. Pitt died; Grenville became Prime Minister, with Fox and Wyndham as his lieutenants, Fox indeed being the real Master of the Ministry of all the Talents, as it was called; the Duke of Bedford became Irish Viceroy; and George Ponsonby succeeded Redesdale as Lord Chancellor.[2] But the bright prospects that had opened were soon darkened by the death of Fox in September.[3] The blow weakened the Ministry; the King's bigotry, which had slept for a time, again became active and aggressive; and when the Ministers introduced a small measure into Parliament, simply assimilating the law in England to that of Ireland, and so enabling Catholics to get commissions in the Army, the King not only demanded that the measure should be at once dropped, but further that Ministers should pledge themselves against all concessions to Catholics. They dropped the measure, but indignantly refused to give pledges for the future, and the irate monarch dismissed them from office with as little ceremony as a farmer might dismiss his ploughboy.[1]

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[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 89-97; Plowden, ii. 44-56, 81-156. On this occasion Pitt laid special stress on the fact that he had never given any specific pledge to support emancipation.

[2] Plowden, ii. 274-83.

[3] *Ibid.* 402-3.

The Duke of Portland became Premier, with Percival Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons; the Parliament, which was but four months old, was dissolved; and members going to the country with the cry of the Church in danger, were returned to power with an enormous majority. To the regret of all Catholic Ireland, Bedford ceased to be Viceroy and was replaced by the Duke of Richmond.[2] Sir Arthur Wellesley became Chief Secretary, Lord Manners succeeded Ponsonby as Lord Chancellor, while Saurin, a violent Anti-Catholic, replaced Plunkett as Attorney-General. Percival's Ministry was often called the No-Popery Ministry, and so well was it known as being Anti-Catholic that in 1807, under advice from Grattan, the Catholics presented no petition to Parliament.[3]

In 1806 a secret society called the Threshers made its appearance in Connaught. Like the Whiteboys, the members often dressed themselves in white shirts and made night attacks; but they appeared in the daytime as well, their special object of attack being the tithe-proctors.[4] A rigorous administration of the ordinary law would have been quite sufficient to put them down; but the Government wanted exceptional power, and in 1807 an Insurrection Act and an Arms Act were passed. Though Sheridan opposed these measures, Grattan voted for them, to the surprise of many in Ireland.[5] Yet the Catholics entrusted their petitions to him in 1808, and in Parliament he was powerfully supported by Ponsonby, now the leader of the Opposition, since Lord Hardwicke had gone to the Lords as Earl Grey. To induce the Ministry to yield, both these Irishmen, with the authority of the Irish Catholics, proposed to give the King a veto on the appointment of Catholic Bishops. Lord Fingal, the delegate sent to London from the Catholic body, certainly so instructed

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[1] Plowden, ii. 500-501; *Annual Register*, p. 136.

[2] Plowden, ii. 542, iii. 645.

[3] *Ibid.* ii. 521-38.

[4] *Ibid.* iii. 405-8.

[5] *Ibid.* 563-86.

Grattan, as did Dr. Milner, an English Bishop, who on many occasions acted as agent of the Irish Catholic Bishops. But there was misunderstanding somewhere. Fingal had distinctly exceeded his instructions in making any such proposal, and Dr. Milner did not represent the Irish Bishops, who, when they met in Dublin, declared by 23 to 3 votes that they wanted no change in the existing mode of appointing to the Episcopacy.[1] But whether the Catholics would agree to the Veto or not, the Government would give them nothing. Grattan and Ponsonby were defeated by 281 to 128 votes;[2] Mr. Parnell's motions for a commutation of tithes in 1809 and 1810 were defeated by large majorities also; and in the latter year Grattan was defeated by 213 to 109 votes when he presented the Catholic petition.[3]

Such progress was slow, nor would it be otherwise until among the Catholic Committee both men and methods were changed. During the Rebellion and the years following the Union that body had not met at all. And when it was revived in 1805 its existence was languid, its meetings irregular, its activity confined to preparing petitions. Its leading members, Lords Gormanstown and Trimleston, were out of touch with the people; Fingal had courage though he had shown little spirit in his correspondence with Lord Redesdale; neither Lord French nor Mr. Hussey was a man of ability; Mr. Scully was a clever lawyer and nothing more; Mr. Clinch was learned but impractical; Dromgoole was a Catholic bigot and ill suited to win Protestant support. As for Keogh, whose services were so valuable in the past, he was old and not easily managed.[4] These leaders for the most part stood in constant dread of provoking the wrath of the Government and were timid; there were jealousies and divisions among them; and the question of the Veto still further divided them, for while Fingal and some of his friends favoured it, the Bishops, backed up by the whole weight of Catholic opinion, opposed it.[5] To meet in Dublin from time to time, to make professions of loyalty to the King, to prepare petitions and present them to Parliament was nothing better than ploughing the sands. These weapons had become rusty and useless. It was necessary that the masses and not merely the classes should act ; that there should be more vigour and determination ; that the united Catholic body should demand concessions, not as a favour but as a right. And the history of the British Parliament in its treatment of Ireland has been, that it is only when the country is fiercely agitated as the sea is in a storm, when it utters the language of menace and speaks with the voice of the whirlwind, only then are concessions given.

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[1] Plowden, iii. 644-77, 696-700, 810-25.

[2] *Ibid.* 657.

[3] *Ibid.* 729-32, 827-58.

[4] Wyse, i. 136-64.

[5] Wyse, i. 171; Plowden, iii. 677-95, 833-75.

To do these things a leader, above all, was necessary, and the leader appeared in the person of Daniel O'Connell. Born of an old Catholic family in Kerry in 1775, he was educated at St. Omer in France, studied law in London and Dublin, and was called to the Irish Bar in 1800. When quite young he wrote in his Journal[1] that he would steadily attach himself to the interests of Ireland ; and that he believed moderation to be the true character of patriotism. In France he had seen the horrors of the Revolution ; in Ireland the horrors of 1798; and during his whole life he abhorred both revolution and rebellion, as he did the shedding of blood. No man felt more keenly the treatment of his co-religionists, but he believed their rights could be won by agitation ; and he had all the qualities that go to make a successful agitator. His frame was that of Hercules ; he was capable of extreme bodily and mental exertion ; he spoke Irish and English with equal fluency, and could therefore reach the masses of the people. A great orator and debater, he was a master of sarcasm and invective, and in Parliament it was woe to the member who attacked himself or his country. A great lawyer, and always on the popular side, he was the terror of Crown lawyers and Crown witnesses, and the partisan judge on the bench shrank from an encounter with him.

But it was on an Irish hillside, in presence of an immense crowd, that he was at his best. He knew the people as the great musician knows his instrument, and could play on their feelings with equal skill. His voice rang out clearly as a bell, and as he spoke his audience laughed or wept, grew sad or gay, raised their heads high with pride when he told them they were the finest peasantry in the world, or muttered curses against the Government when he recounted its evil deeds. Though of undaunted courage, he had no sympathy with violence or crime; cautiously picked his way amid Acts of Parliament, and evaded them as few men could, and made the people in unity and organization feel their strength and respect themselves; and while feeling loyalty to the reigning sovereign, had neither loyalty nor respect for a Minister unfriendly to Ireland. It was he who described Percival's Ministry as taken from the dregs of every party,[1] and it was he who sent out the circular in 1810 inviting the people in every district to meet and form local committees in correspondence with the Catholic Committee in Dublin.[2]

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[1] Housten's *O'Connell's Early Life and Journal*, pp. 193, 202.

The Government were not slow to recognize the new spirit which had arisen, and under the Convention Act of 1793 had all such meetings proclaimed.[3] But the magistrates through the country refused to carry out the proclamation,[4] and the Committee in Dublin met as usual. Fingal and some others were arrested; but Dr. Sheridan, who was the first of them put on trial, was acquitted. The Government was crestfallen and the Catholics elated, but the Catholic Committee in Dublin insisted that Dr. Sheridan's colleagues should also be tried, and this was done in 1812, with the unlooked-for result that Mr. Kirwan, the person then tried, was found guilty, and thus did the defeat of 1812 neutralize the victory of the preceding year.[5]

This was discouraging, but in other things which happened there were elements of hope. O'Connell turned the Catholic Committee into the Catholic Board, and thus evaded the Government proclamation. In 1811 George III. became permanently insane, and henceforth was unable to influence measures or men ; and his son, the Regent, was looked on as a friend to the Catholics. In 1812 Mr. Percival was shot dead in the House of Commons, and Lord Liverpool, who became Premier, though opposed to Emancipation himself, left his colleagues free to vote as they pleased. The four greatest living statesmen in England, Lords Grenville, Grey, and Wellesley and Mr. Canning, refused to take office unless the Catholic claims were conceded.[1] Finally, in the same year (1812), Canning was able to carry a resolution that the laws relating to Catholics should be considered, and in the next year Grattan, supported by Canning and Castlereagh, and with wonderful eloquence by Plunkett, carried a Catholic Relief Bill through its second reading. In committee it was defeated by four votes on an amendment excluding Catholics from Parliament, the amendment having been moved by Abbott, the Speaker, a former Chief Secretary, and always a venomous bigot, and it was moved at the suggestion, or at least with the approval, of the Regent.[2]

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[1] Plowden, ii. 533-4.

[2] *Ibid.* iii. 881-7.

[3] Wyse, Appendix xii.

[4] Burrowes, pp. 76-77.

[5] *Memoirs and Speeches of Peter Burrowes*, pp. 213-85.

Nor was this the only check Emancipation received. In 1812 a new Chief Secretary came to Ireland, Mr. Robert (afterwards Sir Robert) Peel. He was then but twenty-four years of age, of brilliant talents and great determination, but narrow-minded and illiberal, the friend and champion of the Orangemen.[3] In 1814 he suppressed the Catholic Board and attacked O'Connell. O'Connell retorted by calling him Orange Peel, and managed by various shifts to continue the agitation for Catholic rights. The two men became and continued bitter personal enemies. O'Connell still kept agitating. Peel had savage Coercion Acts savagely enforced, and to strengthen the hands of the Central Government he formed a police force independent of the local magistrates, and dependent only on the Executive at Dublin. In 1817 he voluntarily resigned office. It was said he was disgusted with Ireland, and it is certain that Ireland was disgusted with him.[4]

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[1] Shaw-Lefevre, *Peel and O'Connell*, p. 35.

[2] *Colchester's Diary*, vol. ii.

[3] *Ibid.* ii. 468-73.

[4] Shaw-Lefevre, pp. 36-37, 46-47.

But even worse than Peel was the revival of the Veto agitation, a question long destined to divide and weaken the Catholics. Grattan's Bill of 1813 had been supported by Canning and Castlereagh, but only because he conceded the Veto. In the next year the Bill was approved of by the Prefect of the propaganda, Cardinal Quarantotti.[1] Pius VII. was then a prisoner of Napoleon, and extraordinary facilities had been given the Cardinal, which he was not slow to use; nor did the Pope, on his return to Rome in 1815, repudiate but approve of the rescript in which Quarantotti had made known his wish to the Irish Bishops. Dr. Troy was pleased, for the rescript had been obtained through the intrigues of himself and the English Catholics. But the other Irish Bishops, who had already opposed the Veto, believing it would be ruinous to the best interests of the Church, were in a cruel difficulty. Their respect for the Pope imposed on them the duty of remaining silent. But O'Connell and the laity spoke out, and if we exclude Lord Fingal and a few high-placed Catholics, he had the whole Catholic people at his back. Plunkett was praised because he refused to concede the Veto in 1813, Grattan assailed because he had conceded it; and when the Catholics' petition of 1815 was to be presented it was no longer entrusted to Grattan but to Parnell. On the part of the Vetoists, however, Grattan presented petitions in 1816, 1817 and again in 1819, and in the latter year, in a House of nearly 500, he was beaten by only two votes.[2]

The next year Grattan died. He became ill in Ireland, and had he taken the advice of his friends he would have remained in Ireland and died there. But he insisted on crossing to England to present the Catholic petition. His strength, however, failed him, and he died in London in June. He had expressed the wish to be buried in his own land, but as the end approached an offer was accepted of a grave in Westminster Abbey, and there he was interred. He lies near Pitt and Fox and Canning, their contests over in the silence of the tomb; and no one who remembers that their voices often shook the senate and decided the fate of nations will deny that he rests among the mighty dead. And yet every Irishman who stands over his grave feels with a pang that the great patriot is not amongst his own, but amongst strangers. All around are stately monuments which art has fashioned to perpetuate the features of England's great men, and on which eloquence has recounted their deeds. But the tomb of Grattan, obscurely placed, is only a plain flagstone inscribed with the name Henry Grattan—this and nothing more. Worst of all, Grattan lies at the feet of Castlereagh. In death it is surely right that enmities should cease, and on the same field the dust of the conqueror and the conquered are intermingled. And yet it would be a happier arrangement if the founder of Ireland's constitution and its destroyer were placed apart. No Irishman is more respected than Grattan, no one passed through corrupt times with cleaner hands; his stainless character even calumny has been powerless to assail. But no Irishman is more execrated than Castlereagh, no one was more shamefully corrupt; even the lapse of time has failed to throw the pall of oblivion over his infamy. Nevertheless, as if to recall ancient feuds and reawaken bitter memories, the traitor and the patriot have been placed in the closest proximity; the tomb of Grattan a plain flagstone, while Castlereagh, placed high on his marble pedestal, his proud features chiselled by art, his virtues pompously recounted, looks down upon his rival with mocking triumph.

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[1] Wyse, Appendix ix.

[2] *Grattan's Speeches*, pp. 407-12, 416, 431.

It was a melancholy satisfaction to Grattan at the close of his career that of the prophecies made by the supporters of the Union in 1800 not one had been fulfilled. After twenty years nothing had been done for a commutation of tithes, nothing to give Catholics the rights of citizens. Instead of religious animosities having been extinguished, they were still active; nor was the bigotry of Clare and Foster more offensive or more aggressive than that of Abbot and Redesdale and Peel. The discontent which had taken shape in the association of the Threshers, for a time suppressed, had reappeared about

1820 in a more dangerous form, when the secret society of the Ribbonmen came into existence. Nor could the British Parliament, which was said to be so just, find any better remedy for allaying discontent than to pass a series of Coercion Acts, which came year after year as regularly as the seasons. Irish manufactures, which were to prosper, had decayed instead; taxes that were to be diminished had increased; the national revenue was unequal to the national expenditure; the National Debt, which in 1800 was but £18,000,000, was £43,000,000 in 1804,[1] and in 1817 had so increased that the necessary proportion (two to fifteen) to the British Debt was reached and both debts were amalgamated. Protestants as well as Catholics were so dissatisfied that as early as 1810 a meeting of Dublin citizens demanded a repeal of the Union, and the Dublin Grand Jury resolved that "The Act of Union, after ten years' operation, instead of augmenting the comforts, prosperity and happiness of the people, agreeably to the hopes held out by the advocates of that measure, had produced an accumulation of distress; and instead of cementing, they feared that, if not repealed, it might endanger the connexion between the sister islands."[2] Nor was it much consolation to know that all the principal instruments in passing the Act of Union had fared badly. It was, however, true. Clare had died with a howling mob at his windows, and dead cats had been thrown on his coffin. Pitt died when his arch-enemy Napoleon had just humbled Austria and Russia and spoiled all his plans. George III. for the last nine years of his life was a hopeless lunatic. Lastly, Castlereagh, who had become one of the most unpopular men in England, ended his days in 1822 by cutting his throat; and an angry and menacing crowd hooted and hissed as his body was borne to Westminster Abbey.

In the meantime the Catholics for a brief period in the previous year were filled with hope. In 1820 George III. died, and his son and successor, George IV., came to Ireland in the next year. The Irish are a courteous and hospitable people, and a King of England—the first to come for four centuries, and who came with every profession of goodwill—was sure to be welcome. But further, had he not been the special friend of Fox and Sheridan and Grattan, and the special enemy of Pitt? and this alone placed him high in the affections of Irishmen. They rushed with open arms to receive him; the port at which he landed had its name changed from Dunleary to Kingstown; Protestant and Catholic joined together and vied with each other in doing him honour, and as for O'Connell nothing could exceed his enthusiastic loyalty. In leaving the country His Majesty protested his affection for a people of such warm and generous hearts; and he counselled all to avoid causes of irritation and to live in mutual forbearance and goodwill.[1] But he gave no hint that the promises of 1800 would be redeemed, no rebuke to Protestant ascendancy, no message of hope to the afflicted Catholics. Nor indeed could any such message be expected from such a king. It is doubtful if a more degraded character ever sat upon the English throne. To him truth and honour were but empty names. Faithful to no promise and to no friend, he deserted his life-long friends the Whigs because he believed the Tories would be more indulgent to his crimes. A bad son, he vowed that his public conduct as Regent would be governed by filial duty and affection.[2] Without any respect for religion, he opposed Emancipation with bitterness. Marrying beneath him, he publicly denied his marriage, and then went back to the woman who loved him, with new protestations of affection. By ill-treatment he drove his Queen from his house, and then charged her—and not unjustly, it appears—with immoral conduct, while he himself lived in open adultery with his mistress. The worn-out profligate came to Ireland for fresh scenes of riot and debauchery, of gluttony and drunkenness; he came, says Byron, with a legion of cooks and an army of slaves; he cared as little for Ireland as for Timbuctoo, and the Irish people who cheered him and flattered him only earned the contempt of all

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[1] *Grattan's Life*, v. 370-71; Plowden, ii. 9-10.

[2] *Grattan's Life*, v. 419; Plowden, iii. 897.

[1] Wyse, Appendix xiii.

[2] *Colchester's Diary*, ii. 316-17.

men, and proved that if their condition was one of slavery, they themselves had contracted the vices of slaves.

Two years after this date O'Connell dined at a friend's house in Wicklow (Glencullen, the residence of Mr. O'Mara)[1] with a young Catholic lawyer named Richard Lalor Sheil. Sheil favoured the Veto. The two gentlemen spoke much of the condition of their country, and sought a remedy for its ills. The Catholic Committee which promised much had done but little, nor had the Catholic Board. The fact was that neither had been sufficiently in touch with the masses, and perished for want of popular support. Their dissolution had been hastened by the coercive measures of Peel, which appear to have intimidated even O'Connell. The unfortunate question of the Veto by dividing the Catholics still further weakened them, and rendered them impotent for a renewed effort. But if Catholic rights were ever to be won inactivity would not do. Nor could any fresh organization accomplish anything which, composed only of peers and lawyers, confined itself to preparing petitions to Parliament.

Taught by experience, O'Connell was convinced that it was necessary to reach the people, the clergy, the professional men, the shopkeeper, the farmer, the labourer. They must assemble together and discuss their wrongs, and they must expose the intolerance of the Orangemen, the extortions of the State Church, the insolence and brutality of the squireens, the iniquities of the Courts of Justice.

Nor was the time selected for the Catholics to bestir themselves unpropitious. The Viceroy, Lord Wellesley, as the constant friend of emancipation, had so incurred the ire of the Orangemen that they attacked him in a Dublin theatre and hurled a bottle at the Viceregal box. An Orange jury refused to convict the rioters, and in consequence the Viceroy's love for the Orangemen did not increase, nor his desire to harass the Catholics as the Orangemen wished.

In 1821 Plunkett, aided by Canning, carried a Catholic Relief Bill in the House of Commons. It was thrown out by the Lords, and to put down some disturbances in Ireland Coercion Acts were passed then and in the following year. However, Wellesley was continued as Viceroy and Plunkett replaced the bigot Saurin as Attorney-General, and when Castlereagh died his place was filled by Canning. Lastly, the question of the Veto ceased to be agitated, for the Papal Court ceased to urge it, seeing on the one hand that it had not induced Parliament to concede anything, and on the other that the Irish people would not have their bishops appointed by a Protestant Government. Dr. Troy also died in 1823, and not one of his surviving colleagues sympathized fully with his peculiar views on public questions. And lately there had been added to their number the brilliant Dr. Doyle of Kildare, who courageously spoke out denouncing in scathing terms the Government of Ireland, and demanding that her wrongs should be redressed.[1]

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[1] M'Donagh's *O'Connell*, pp. 124-5.

This was the state of things when O'Connell and Sheil founded the Catholic Association in 1823. The object was declared to be emancipation "by legal and constitutional means," and to evade the Convention Act it assumed no delegated or representative character. It was merely a club, holding its meetings once a week, open to the press, its members paying a yearly subscription of one guinea. Its progress was slow, and sometimes there was a difficulty in getting together the necessary ten members to form a quorum.[2] But with O'Connell at its head working with tireless energy it made headway. Before two years had elapsed it had peers and bishops (Dr. Doyle and Murray) and hundreds of clergy in its ranks. Subsidiary associations arose in every parish, their members paying one penny a month Catholic rent. There were no less than 30,000 collectors of this rent, and the members could be counted by hundreds of thousands. Under the presidency of the priests these associations had their meeting-place and their meeting once a week, where they discussed public questions, ventilated local grievances, transmitted their rent to the central body at Dublin, and got in exchange advice and assistance in their difficulties. Its progress and power so alarmed the Government that a special Act of Parliament suppressing the Association was formed in 1825.

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[1] *Letters on the State of Ireland*; Wyse, i. 194-9; Shaw-Lefevre, pp. 50-59.

[2] M'Donagh's *Life of O'Connell*, pp. 125-6.

At the same time a Catholic Relief Bill was introduced and passed the House of Commons, though it was thrown out in the Lords. The rejected Bill also provided for payment to the Catholic clergy, and the disfranchisement of the 40s. freeholders, provisions intensely unpopular in Ireland. O'Connell, however, in his anxiety for Emancipation had assented to the measure in its entirety, and for a short time lost the confidence of the Catholics. But he righted himself by expressing regret for what he had done and by denouncing the Algerine Act, as he called the Act suppressing the Association, and by being able to defeat the Act in forming the new Catholic Association for charitable and educational purposes and "for all purposes not prohibited by law."[1]

As a matter of fact, the Algerine Act became a dead letter. The new Catholic Association, it is true, could not by delegates and Committees demand changes either in Church or State, nor consist of affiliated associations, nor correspond with such for obtaining reforms. But it could defend Catholic doctrines and repel Protestant attacks; it could give legal assistance to prisoners and prosecute Orangemen who violated the law; it could pay expenses of petitions and Parliamentary elections; it could advance the cause of education and encourage an honest press; it could take the census and so expose the iniquity of having a majority of the people pay for the church of a small minority. All these things it did. The Catholic rent continued to be collected with such success that £500 a week was sent to Dublin. Aggregate meetings, nominally independent of the Association, but really organized by them, were regularly held in the different counties, and then Provincial meetings on a much larger scale. And at these meetings the priests exhorted, the gentry spoke, sometimes Protestants were present, and often O'Connell or Sheil came from Dublin to encourage the people and pour ridicule on their enemies. Dr. Doyle's pen laid bare the infamies of Irish government, and fearlessly declared that if a rebellion broke out not one of the Catholic bishops would issue a sentence of excommunication against the rebels. The writings of Moore and Sheil struck terror into many a bigot and intimidated many an enemy of the people, and in England they were aided by Jeffrey and Cobbett and Sydney Smith. The English Nonconformists were becoming friendly, and the Ulster Presbyterians for the moment forgot the virtues of John Knox and joined hands with the Papists against a bloated Church Establishment and extortionate tithes. The 40s. freeholders, who were wont to be driven to the poll like cattle to vote for their landlords, revolted, and under the influence of the priests voted for Mr. Dawson in Louth, and defeated the landlord and his nominees. Similar victories were won in Monaghan and Westmeath. Greatest of all was the victory won at Waterford. It was the stronghold of the Beresfords, whom it was considered hopeless to attempt to defeat. Yet the Beresford nominee was opposed, the priests and agitators canvassed and organized and inspired the people with courage, and the candidate of the Catholic Association was placed at the head of the poll.

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[1] Wyse, pp. 199-224, Appendices xiv. xv. xvi.

These things happened in 1826. The next year Lord Liverpool became seriously ill, and resigned the Premiership after holding the office continuously for fifteen years. He was not regretted in Ireland. He was a Conservative of the meaner sort, with a narrow outlook and limited capacity, a man who had such a horror of all change that, as a French writer wittily put it, had he lived on the morning of creation he would have begged God to preserve chaos. He was in sympathy with Castlereagh when he supported the despots who constituted the Holy Alliance; he also supported Sidmouth in those repressive measures which culminated in the Six Acts and the Peterloo massacre. But when Canning succeeded Castlereagh in 1822 he compelled Liverpool to leave the Catholic question

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an open one in the Cabinet, and on the Catholic Relief Bill of 1825 the strange spectacle was seen of Canning supporting the measure, while on the other side was the Home Secretary, Peel. When Canning succeeded Liverpool as Premier, Catholic Ireland was full of hope. But nothing was done. The King stubbornly opposed concession, and so did a majority in the Lords; and Peel, refusing to take office, incessantly attacked the Premier, and probably helped to shorten his days.[1] He died in August 1827.

A nonentity named Lord Goderich succeeded Canning, but his Government did not last, and early in 1828 the Duke of Wellington formed a Government with Peel Home Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons. From these two—both declared enemies of Emancipation—no good was expected in Ireland, and Wellington's brother refusing to serve under an Anti-Catholic Premier, resigned his office of Viceroy. Eldon, however, was not appointed English Chancellor as he expected, and Lord Wellesley's successor, the Marquis of Anglesey, was not unfavourable to the Catholics, one of his first acts being to proclaim an Orange procession in Dublin. All the same, the omens were unpropitious, and it looked as if Emancipation, which lately loomed so large, had again, like the fabled island in the Atlantic, become but a speck on the horizon. And yet the fact was that the crisis had really come, and an event happened before the end of the year which brought the long and weary struggle to a close.

Probably O'Connell would have preferred to get Emancipation from Canning rather than from Wellington and Peel. But he was a practical politician, ready to accept it from any Ministry, and it was consoling that even under Wellington Emancipation was still left an open question, and therefore individual Ministers might vote for it or not as they pleased. It was hopeful also that no attempt had been made to put down the Catholic Association, and no encouragement given to Orange violence by the new Viceroy; and still better that Sir Francis Burdett's motion in favour of the Catholics (in 1828) had been carried in the House of Commons, though it had been defeated in the Lords. And O'Connell rejoiced that the same session witnessed the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; for while these Acts remained on the Statute Book they were an argument against Emancipation, and in fact had been often used as such. But it was discouraging that Peel had opposed Burdett's motion, and that Wellington had helped to defeat it in the Lords.

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[1] Shaw-Lefevre, pp. 80-81.

In consequence it was determined by O'Connell and his friends that in every contested election the whole weight of the Catholic Association was to be thrown into the scale against the Government candidate. A contest soon arose which brought the opposing forces into the field. On a minor question of reform the friends of Canning still left in the Ministry had resigned, and in the rearrangement of affairs Mr. Vesey FitzGerald, promoted to the office of President of the Board of Trade, had to seek re-election for the County of Clare. The Catholic Association determined to oppose him, though he was the son of Prime Sergeant FitzGerald, who had so manfully opposed the Union, and though Mr. FitzGerald had on every occasion supported Emancipation. O'Connell was appealed to by Lord John Russell and the principal Whigs on Mr. FitzGerald's behalf, and he would have acceded to their request, but was outvoted at the Catholic Association, and it was resolved to contest Clare. Major M'Namara, a popular Clare landlord, was at first asked to stand; but after an unreasonable and vexatious delay he declined, and then it was determined that O'Connell himself should be the man. He could not, of course, take the Oath prescribed for a seat in Parliament, but if he were elected he would come thundering at the doors of Parliament, the representative of 6,000,000 of Catholics, and if he were denied admittance it would be impossible to preserve the peace of Ireland.

The memorable contest opened in July. Had it been fought out five years earlier the Catholics would certainly have been beaten. Success depended on the 40s. freeholders, and these were at the mercy of the landlords. Their little holdings

—often but half an acre—were insufficient to support a family; they depended for existence on labour given by their landlords; they were often in arrears of rent ; and if they failed to vote as their landlord wished, labour was no longer given and rent was demanded ; and if not promptly paid, Peel's Act for cheapening evictions[1] was had recourse to, and the freeholder and his family found themselves on the roadside, and in a country where there was no poor law.[2] But great changes had come. The Catholic Association had grown so powerful that it overshadowed the Viceroy's Government. Week after week the Catholic rent came rolling in. Two churchwardens in each parish took account of all local grievances and sent their information to Dublin, and from Dublin came in return a Weekly Register containing the leader's speeches.[3] The adoption of Mr. Wyse's suggestion to have Liberal Clubs in each parish and County Clubs in correspondence with a head Club in Dublin brought all districts and counties in easy communication.[4] The priests, who in the beginning had held aloof, were everywhere members and leaders of the Catholic Association. A new rent was collected for the special purpose of aiding those freeholders who had been victimized by their votes at the Waterford and Louth elections, and this, while it emboldened the tenants, struck terror into the landlords.[5]

To such perfection had the national organization been brought that 800,000 Catholics had signed a petition in favour of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, and without any difficulty Mr. Sheil's motion was carried out to have on a certain day (January 1828) a meeting to petition Parliament in every parish in Ireland. Nor was this all. Some French travellers had lately written letters from Ireland to French newspapers, and their accounts of Irish misgovernment shocked France. These newspapers were read in Germany and Italy, and when an English traveller in these countries boasted of the glory of his country, he was directed to look at the misgovernment of Ireland. From across the

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[1] Mitchel's *History of Ireland*, ii. 149.
[2] Wyse, i. 214.
[3] *Ibid.* 338-40.
[4] *Ibid.* 342-6.
[5] *Ibid.* 295-302.

Atlantic came an angrier growl. Already the Irish emigrants were so potent in the United States that they started branches of the Catholic Association. Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, and even South America, also expressed their sympathy.[1] Informed of these things, at last even the 40s. freeholder took courage, and though his position was still that of a slave, he began to assume the manlier attitude of a freeman.

It was in these circumstances that O'Connell issued his address to the Clare electors and came to Ennis with a strong letter of recommendation from Dr. Doyle of Kildare. His agents and helpers who had preceded him had already done much. Sheil's eloquence was hard to resist. Tom Steele, a Protestant and a Clare landlord, had expressed his willingness to fight any of FitzGerald's chief supporters who felt aggrieved, and O'Gorman Mahon, and Honest Jack Lawless, all the way from Ulster, were equally ready with their weapons. Father Tom Maguire, who had lately castigated the Protestant champion Pope, came from Leitrim to lend his aid. Finally, the priests in every parish worked night and day, arguing, entreating, confirming the strong, encouraging the timid, urging all to despise the threats of the landlords, whose object was to keep the people still in chains.

To these appeals an enthusiastic response was given, and to Ennis came the peasants of every district of Clare, from Burren to Loop Head, from the cliffs of Moher to the banks of the Shannon, and during the six days the contest lasted there were no less than 30,000 persons bivouacked in the streets of the county town.

And when O'Connell arrived in his green carriage there was sent up from that mass of men such a shout as made the old Fergus tremble in its bed. The crowd shouted themselves hoarse, threw up their hats, laughed and cried by turns, while the women of Ennis gathered at the windows were no less demonstrative than the men. Nor was there any violence, or rowdyism, or drunkenness, but the most perfect self-restraint, absolute obedience to their priests. Regardless of consequences, the tenants openly deserted their landlords. "The landlord," said one of them, "may take my cow, my pig, my home, even my body, but he has no power over my soul," and this was the spirit which universally prevailed. The man who promised the priests and then broke his word was considered to have committed a crime of the blackest dye; and one of the most solemn scenes of the election was witnessed when a priest on the platform and 10,000 men in front of it dropped on their knees in prayer for such a man. He had broken his word to the priest and had died suddenly on the following day, and the people were asked to pray to God that the dead man might be forgiven. When the contest closed, O'Connell had 2054 votes, while only 1075 had voted for FitzGerald. The blindest could see that the crisis had come, that the freeholders of Clare had emancipated Ireland.[1]

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[1] Wyse, i. 305-14.

The Orangemen were frantic at the prospect of being deprived of their sacred right to trample upon the Catholics. One of the many worthless princes of the House of Hanover, the Duke of Brunswick, had lately declared his abhorrence of Emancipation, and the Orangemen, choosing him for the time as their patron saint, established Brunswick Clubs throughout Ulster. Modelled on the Liberal Clubs, their declared object was to resist Emancipation, as the object of the latter was to obtain it, and when Jack Lawless, accompanied by 140,000 Catholics, entered Monaghan for the purpose of establishing branches there of the Catholic Association, an organized and menacing mob of Orangemen met him at Ballybay, and nothing but the abandonment of the intended meeting saved the opposing forces from a bloody conflict.

On the other hand, the Catholics held meetings in Tipperary at which language of extreme violence was used, and once a police barrack was set on fire. O'Connell, however, interfered and further meetings were abandoned. His return from Clare was a succession of triumphs, but with all his mighty influence he found it hard to restrain his co-religionists, and if concession did not come quickly it would be impossible to keep the peace.

[1] *Sheil's Speeches*, pp. 46, 70; Wyse, pp. 370-98.

The Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Dr. Curtis, was an old friend of the Duke of Wellington, and to him he made a personal appeal. But the Duke would only promise that if things quieted down in Ireland something might be done. The Archbishop enclosed the letter to Lord Anglesey, and the Viceroy in answering said that he disagreed with Wellington, and that the Catholics ought not to relinquish the employment of all constitutional means for redress. These letters became public, and Wellington instantly recalled Anglesey. His departure in February 1829 reminded men of the departure of Fitzwilliam in 1795; it was equally regretted and created equal alarm as to what might follow.[1] The Ribbonmen became active in Munster; the Catholics everywhere only waited for the word of O'Connell to rise to arms; the Orangemen became more menacing and violent; troops were hurriedly sent across from England; and it seemed as if thirty years after '98 the horrors of '98 were to be renewed.

But other things were happening behind the scenes. In July of the preceding year Anglesey warned the Government that neither the police nor soldiers could be relied on. At the Clare election they had repeatedly cheered O'Connell, and a Welsh regiment lately sent over to Waterford had been guilty of the same offence. It was these things that caused Peel to declare for Emancipation, but he was yielding to necessity rather than to conviction; and while he advised Wellington to settle the Catholic question at once, he desired to resign office rather than be a party to concession. Wellington persuaded him to remain, and concession was decided on.[2] But the King was still obdurate. Wellington, however, worked well on his fears, pointing out that the Catholics would strike against rent and tithes, that the Church in Ireland would be ruined and the Protestants undone. At last, with rage and bitterness,[3] the King yielded, and when Parliament opened in February the King's Speech announced that Emancipation would be granted and the Catholic Association would be suppressed. The Bill of Suppression passed both Houses quietly. But before introducing the Catholic Relief Bill, Peel resigned and sought re-election for Oxford University, where he was defeated by a Protestant ascendancy candidate. He was then returned for the borough of Westbury, and in March, in a masterly speech of four hours, he introduced the Emancipation Bill. Catholics were to be admitted to Parliament and Corporations, and to all offices, except a few of the higher, such as the Lord Chancellorship, the office of Viceroy, and that of Commander-in-Chief; Jesuits were to be banished the kingdom; other religious orders rendered incapable of receiving charitable bequests; bishops prohibited from assuming territorial titles; priests from wearing vestments outside their churches; and, further, the 40s. freeholders were disfranchised and the franchise raised to a £10 valuation. There was opposition in both Houses, but the Government were too powerful to be resisted; and the Bill passed its third reading in the Commons by a majority of 178, and in the Lords by a majority of 104. On the 13th of April the Royal Assent was given, and on the following day the new Act became law. Catholic Ireland rejoiced that the measure was not clogged by any conditions about the Veto or the payment of the clergy, and all good men rejoiced that it had passed without the shedding of blood. Had it been carried as part of the Union, the Union would have been regarded by the Catholic masses only as the extinction of a corrupt and bigoted assembly. Had it been carried subsequently by Pitt, they would have been grateful to him for having done what their own Parliament was unwilling to do. Had it passed when Pitt was gone, England would have carried out the promises made at the Union, and the honour of a great nation, tarnished by Pitt, would have been redeemed. But it passed after a toilsome delay of twenty-nine years; after the promises made in 1800 had been in every respect falsified; after concession had been persistently denied; and after a series of savage Coercion Acts had followed each other, year after year, with monotonous regularity. It passed when Ireland was roused as she had never been before; when angry Protestants and angry Catholics stood facing each other in menace; when the alternative before the Government was concession or civil war. Peel gave the credit to Grattan and Plunkett and Canning; his own speech was grudging, bigoted, unsympathetic; and it was plain that he would have resisted if he could. With a soldier's frankness, Wellington was plainer still, admitting that he conceded only to avoid the horrors of civil war.

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[1] *Greville's Memoirs*, i. 154-8, 163-4; Dunlop's *O'Connell*, pp. 218-20.

[2] Shaw-Lefevre, pp. 92-93.

[3] Greville, i. 18.

The manner of concession was indeed ungracious. The 40s. freeholders were disfranchised because they were no longer slaves of their landlords, but had the courage to vote for O'Connell. The provisions about bishops and religious orders were irritating. Finally, the new Act was not retrospective. To avoid embarrassing the Government, O'Connell had not attempted to take his seat, and when he did after the Bill was passed, he was tendered the old oath, which he refused. He argued with great ability at the bar of the House that he was entitled to come in under the new oath, but his claim was disallowed by 190 to 116 votes, and two days later, on the 21st of May, a new writ was issued for Clare. Some time elapsed until the Voters' Lists under the new £10 franchise were made out, nor was it until the end of July that the election took place. Of course, O'Connell was elected, and even without opposition. In fact, his journey from Dublin to Limerick, and thence to Ennis, was the march of a conqueror.[1] The slight put upon him by the Government in drafting their Bill—it was said to have been done intentionally by Peel—only endeared him all the more to his own countrymen. They are quick to respond to sympathy and kindness, to forget in concessions graciously given the wrongs of the past. But the manner and spirit in which Emancipation had been conceded showed them that it had been conceded with reluctance, that it was their own strength which had won, that all their appeals to reason and fair-play had fallen upon a barren soil, and that concession came not from England's justice but from her fears.

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[1] M'Donagh, pp. 185-90.

CHAPTER VI

After Emancipation

SELDOM has a leader of men been able to command so completely the attachment of his fellow-countrymen as O'Connell in 1829. If the long struggle had ended in success the Irish people readily recognized that it was to him success was due. Grattan and Plunkett had fought in the cause of Emancipation, and it was the glory of O'Connell to have succeeded where such great men had failed. He was not perhaps more sincere than they had been—for their sincerity was undoubted—but he had far greater capacity for leadership; he employed newer and better methods, and he knew how to employ them with greater skill. He was the first to teach the Catholics to demand equality, not as a favour but as a right; he induced the clergy to join the people and lead them, and he had the satisfaction of seeing that the combination of priests and people was irresistible. With infinite patience, with unwearied energy, with grim tenacity, so unusual in an Irish leader, he had for more than twenty-five years combated bigotry. Grudging no labour, sparing no effort, he sacrificed time which was badly wanted by the exacting demands of his profession. His courage, his resource, his zeal in the people's cause could not escape recognition, and long before 1829 he had outdistanced all other leaders in the people's esteem. To the Catholics, so long insulted and despised, it was matter for pride that one of their race and creed was able to champion their cause against the ablest champions of ascendancy, and on more than equal terms. The Government informer could no longer convict innocence by perjury without having his infamy exposed; the Crown lawyer's sneers and insults were paid back by ridicule and sarcasm ; the partisan judge who had so often browbeaten the Catholic client and lawyer was now confronted by a fearless advocate who rebuked his partisanship and his bigotry, and laid bare his ignorance of law ; and when the Orange Corporation of Dublin was described by O'Connell as a beggarly Corporation and an Orange champion stepped forward to defend it, O'Connell met him on the duelling field and shot him dead. Slaves the Catholics had been in their own land, but O'Connell infused into them the spirit of freemen ; their gratitude was unbounded, and had he asked them in 1829 to follow him to battle they would have done so with enthusiasm. There was, however, no necessity for such heroic measures, and it is one of O'Connell's great merits that without the shedding of a single drop of blood his victory had been won.

In the estimation of the more ignorant among the Catholics that victory meant the advent of the millennium.[1] Tithes and rents were to be reduced, recurrent famines to cease, poverty to be lessened, prosperity to increase. The bonfires which lighted the hill-tops in honour of the new enactment announced a new era of contentment and happiness ; and a Limerick farmer, being asked what he understood by Emancipation, answered at once that the labourer who had worked for sixpence a day would henceforth get a shilling.[2] These absurd hopes seriously entertained indicated a low state of political intelligence, and were not, of course, indulged in by O'Connell. When he wrote from London, the day after the Emancipation Bill passed, he dated his letter the first day of Freedom.[3] The Catholics, at last admitted to the rights of citizens, were theoretically on a level with the Protestants ; but O'Connell knew well that the equality was only in theory. In every country much depends on the spirit in which laws are administered, and the administration of law in Ireland still remained in Protestant hands. The high officers of State, from the Viceroy down, were of that creed ; the Under-Secretary, Gregory, who controlled the executive throughout the country, was a bitter and bigoted enemy of the Catholics; the sheriffs, the grand jurors, the magistrates in the inferior courts, the judges in the superior courts, were men of the same stamp; the tithe farmer and tithe proctor were still supported by Government and by law in all these extortions; the landlord could still rack-rent and underpay his labourer; the Church of the masses remained impoverished and its ministers despised, while the scanty earnings of the Catholic masses went to maintain a Church which they abhorred, and kept its ministers in indolence and luxury, with fine churches and glebes and fat incomes, some of whom had not a single Protestant in their parishes.[1]

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[1] Gregory's *Letter-Box*, p. 267.

[2] Lefanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, p. 312.

[3] FitzPatrick's *Correspondence of O'Connell*, i. 180.

"Men are mistaken," said O'Connell, "who suppose that the history of the world will be over as soon as we are emancipated. *That* will be the time to *commence* the struggle for popular rights."[2] In such a struggle the Catholic lawyer who wanted a seat on the bench, the place-hunter who entered Parliament only to betray the people, would be of little use. But O'Connell was a host in himself, and had Emancipation done nothing else than admit him to the House of Commons, it would have been a great gain for Ireland. His countrymen, in gratitude for his services, wished to present him with a National testimonial, and when it was ascertained that henceforth he would devote his whole time to Parliamentary affairs and sacrifice his lucrative practice at the Bar, the testimonial took the form of an annual tribute. It became known as the O'Connell Rent, hardly ever fell in any year below £16,000, and sometimes went far beyond this figure, and to the end of O'Connell's life was managed with great care and prudence by his life-long friend, Mr. P. V. FitzPatrick.[3]

Secured in this income, O'Connell ceased his practice at the Bar and appeared only when some great emergency arose, or when the lives or liberties of the people were specially imperilled. Quite satisfied that the Union was an iniquitous transaction which was inflicting serious injury on Ireland, he endeavoured to have the Union repealed, and for that purpose, in the autumn and winter of 1829, he appealed in many public letters to the Protestants for their assistance. He asked them to join him in lessening burdens, in advancing trade and commerce, in establishing popular rights, in curbing class monopoly, in purifying the grand juries and corporations, in protecting the Parliamentary voters by the secrecy of the ballot.[1]

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[1] *Creevy Papers*, ii. 76.

[2] Dunlop's *O'Connell*, p. 222.

[3] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 202.

This was his programme when he took his seat in Parliament early in 1830. He was then at an age when men do not easily accommodate themselves to new surroundings, and the fact that he was without a rival on an Irish platform and at the Irish Bar was no guarantee that he would be a success in Parliament. Yet he soon became one of the greatest Parliamentary debaters, speaking on law reform, on Parliamentary reform, on Irish distress, even on purely Imperial questions, and on all these speaking well.[2] But though he acquired Parliamentary eminence, he could do nothing for Ireland, for he spoke to unsympathetic ears. A few only among the Liberals—the Radical section—gave him any assistance, and as for the Tories, they regarded him and his programme with aversion. They had granted Emancipation ungraciously and reluctantly, and they were resolved that there should be no further concessions. Goulburn, the Chief Secretary, as well as his successor, Sir Henry Hardinge, were patrons and favourers of the Orangemen; they both resisted every attempt at popular agitation and rigorously enforced the Coercion Act of the previous year; and O'Connell was satisfied that the only hope for Ireland was to drive the Duke of Wellington from power.[3] That event happened in a few months. George IV. died in June, and a general election followed in July, when the Tories came back with a diminished majority, and in the following November they were defeated and were replaced by a Whig Ministry under Lord Grey.

This turn of events gave much satisfaction to O'Connell.

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[1] Dunlop, p. 237.
[2] Cusack, i. 29, 38-40.
[3] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 203-5.

George IV. had consistently opposed all reform, and Ireland rejoiced to see the end of his career of infamy. His successor, William IV., on the contrary, had spoken and voted for Emancipation in the House of Lords. Lord Grey, the friend of Fox and Sheridan and Grattan, had suffered for his Liberal convictions in long exclusion from office. Among his Ministers, Lord Brougham and Lord John Russell were on friendly terms with O'Connell ; and Lord Melbourne and Mr. Grant had filled the office of Chief Secretary, and because of their impartiality had incurred the enmity of the Orangemen. Lord Anglesey, the new Viceroy, had left Ireland in the previous year, telling O'Connell to continue his agitation, and with a reputation for justice and fair-play not inferior to that of Lord Fitzwilliam. As for Stanley, the new Chief Secretary, he was a young man of thirty, not yet tried in any high office ; but he was known to be a man of great courage and ability, and of splendid debating power, who had already made his mark in Parliament. O'Connell himself was satisfied that Anglesey was going to Ireland with the best intentions, and he hoped that he would at least alleviate, if he could not cure, the national miseries.[1]

These hopes were soon blighted. Before his departure for Ireland, Anglesey had an interview with O'Connell, to whom he offered high Government office, hoping thus to purchase his co-operation and goodwill. But O'Connell declined office, and would co-operate only on condition that in addition to legislative reform there should be a complete change in the composition of the Irish Executive. Undoubtedly Anglesey favoured a Tithe Bill and also a measure directing the surplus revenues of the Protestant Church to education and relief of the poor ; but in these matters he was overruled by Stanley, who had a seat in the Cabinet, and who had at all times much more sympathy with coercion than with concession. In Irish administration the Viceroy did well in dismissing Gregory, but worse than ill in making Doherty Chief-Justice and Blackbourne Attorney-General, both of whom, especially

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[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 23-33.

Doherty, were intensely unpopular; while liberal lawyers such as O'Loughlin and Perrin and Holmes were left out in the cold.[1]

O'Connell felt specially aggrieved, for Doherty was a personal and a bitter enemy, and even friends of the Government felt that such an appointment was needlessly irritating and provocative.[2] After all, if the aid of the Irish leader was sought for by the Whigs, something more than insults should be given in exchange; the denial of concession on one side, met on the other by agitation and defiance, must necessarily end in conflict rather than in co-operation, and when Anglesey entered Dublin his reception was chilly, while O'Connell entered the city welcomed by cheering crowds.

While the Tories were still in office, O'Connell had established the "Anti-Union Association." This, however, was at once suppressed by Government, as was also another association, "The Irish Volunteers for the Repeal of the Union." Then O'Connell established "Repeal Breakfasts" at a Dublin hotel, at which Anti-Union speeches were made, and he had the satisfaction of seeing that the Crown lawyers could not pronounce them illegal. He had also the satisfaction of hurling some abusive epithets at the Chief Secretary, Hardinge, whom he described as "a contemptible little soldier," "the chance child of fortune and war."[3] In Mr. Stanley he found a bolder and an abler foe. Every political Society formed was instantly suppressed, even "A Party meeting for Dinner at Hayes' Tavern." By flattering the Orangemen, and even drinking at a public dinner the Orange toast of the "Glorious, pious and immortal memory," O'Connell had brought Orange and Green together; the movement for repeal was attaining such dimensions that Stanley resolved to strike hard; and Anglesey, after consulting his law officers and having O'Connell arrested, declared that "things had come to that pass that the question is whether O'Connell or I shall rule Ireland."

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[1] Greville, ii. 101-3, 110-11; FitzPatrick's *Doyle*, i. 233-50; *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 237-8.

[2] M'Donagh's *O'Connell*, pp. 215-16, 217.

[3] *Ibid.* 210-12.

The arrest took place in January 1831, the trial in the following month, part of the indictment being under the ordinary law, part under the Coercion Act of 1829. To the charge of having broken the former, O'Connell pleaded not guilty. He agreed, however, to plead guilty to having broken the Coercion Act, but with the proviso that he was not to come up for judgment till April, a date subsequently postponed till May. Stanley and his law officers were jubilant at thus having caught their great antagonist. But the fact was he had outwitted them, for before May came the Coercion Act had expired, and he could no longer be punished under an Act which had ceased to exist.[1]

If Stanley was disappointed at the result, his Ministerial colleagues were not,[2] for the Reform struggle was proceeding and O'Connell's aid was earnestly sought, as it was ungrudgingly given. After the general election of 1830 he was at the head of a strong party, which was augmented at the election in the next year. At the head of this party he saved the Whigs from defeat, for the first Bill was carried only by a majority of one; the third and last Bill he supported at the head of a party of fifty-three. He supported Government candidates at the polls; he consistently supported the Reform Bills by speech and vote in Parliament; he even ceased his repeal agitation the better to aid the Whigs; nor did he cease to aid them until the third Reform Bill of 1832 became law. For all this he got little in return. He asked for Ireland as part of the measure of reform an extended franchise such as had been given to Great Britain, but was refused. Seeing what Ireland's population was, he asked for at least 25 additional members, but got only 5. He expected that Stanley and Anglesey would be removed, but they were retained after the Reform Act as before. He expected a change in the spirit of Irish government, and found Protestant ascendancy still in power, and not a single Catholic appointed stipendiary magistrate, nor a single one on the bench. Instead of being thanked he was hated by the King, and equally so by Lord Grey, and in Parliament he was frequently assailed by Stanley with bitter invective. Worst of all, instead of some measures of reform being attempted, the first Irish Bill of the Reformed Parliament in 1833 was a savage Coercion Act.[1]

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[1] M'Donagh, pp. 220-23.

[2] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 250.

At that date, it is true, much lawlessness prevailed, the result of great suffering and discontent. Though crops had failed and poverty was extreme,[2] excessive rent and tithes were exacted ; a Vestry cess was still levied for repairs of Protestant churches ; and the tithe proctor was protected and sustained by an insolent and lawless yeomanry.[3] As no redress could be had from Parliament, secret societies increased—Blackfeet, Whitefeet, Terryalts, Ribbonmen and others—and in one year no less than 196 murders were committed.[4] With the approbation of O'Connell and Dr. Doyle, the collection of tithes was met with passive resistance, and when cattle or crops or furniture was seized by the proctors and offered at public auction, nobody would buy. Sometimes the people's patience was exhausted, and they resisted the serving of processes, and compelled the proctors to eat them instead of serving them. The result was collision and murder. At Newtownbarry in Wexford, in June 1831, the people attending a tithe auction were fired on by the police and yeomanry, 13 being killed and many more wounded ; at Skibbereen the parson, though he knew that the people were in such want that they were living on seaweed and nettles, insisted on his tithes, and being resisted, his escort of police and yeomanry shot 30 persons dead. At Carrickshock in Carlow (December 1831) a young man who endeavoured to seize the processes was shot dead, and the enraged crowd fell with fury on the police, killing 11 of them, not a few of themselves also losing their lives.[5] Instead of regarding these painful occurrences as the natural outcome of injustice crying aloud for a remedy, Parliament only talked of Irish lawlessness and confiscation of Church property; and in lieu of tithes which could not be collected, the enormous sum of £1,000,000 was voted to the Protestant clergy. A Parliamentary Committee then investigated the tithe question; and though Dr. Doyle had no difficulty in showing the essential injustice of the system,[1] a Liberal Government did nothing but pass a "Tithe Composition Act" (1832), making tithes payable in money; and a "Church Temporalities Act" (1833), reducing the number of Protestant bishops from 22 to 12, diverting the saving thus effected to the building and repair of churches, and by consequence abolishing the vexatious Vestry cess.[2]

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[1] M'Donagh, pp. 224-6.

[2] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 284 ; *MacHale's Letters*, pp. 202, 206.

[3] *Ibid.* i. 282-3 ; *Life of Doyle*, i. 518, ii. 256.

[4] *Doyle*, ii. 329, 458.

[5] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 277 ; *Doyle*, pp. 403-6 ; Mitchel, ii. 173.

But tithes were still to be paid, and to crush all resistance a Coercion Act was passed (1833) empowering the Viceroy to proclaim any meeting he pleased, even a meeting to petition; to put any district under martial law by which all offences committed there might be tried in the military courts by military officers; and in all such districts the inhabitants were bound to keep indoors from sunset to sunrise.[3] No Coercion Act of such atrocious severity as this had been passed since the Union. It seems certain from his letters to Lord Cloncurry,[4] it was not sought for by Anglesey, least of all unaccompanied by generous healing measures; it was not favoured by the Ministry as a whole; and Lord Althorp, who introduced it, did so without enthusiasm or conviction.[5] It was combated at every stage with consummate ability by O'Connell, aided by some of the Radicals. But Stanley fought for the whole Bill with desperate energy, gave a lurid picture of Irish lawlessness and crime, assailed O'Connell with venom and bitterness as the centre and guide of Irish disaffection, and at length, by boldness of statement, by reckless assertion, which his great talents made appear as arguments, he convinced those who had been unconvinced and the measure became law. O'Connell was furious, denounced the Chief Secretary as Scorpion Stanley, the majority in Parliament as 600 scoundrels, and Lord Grey and his party as "the base, brutal and bloody Whigs." In reality the new Act did not put down Irish crime.[1] Nor was it rigorously enforced, and if it had been it would have brought on civil war. The conviction increased among the Liberals that Anglesey and Stanley were unsuitable for their positions, and before many months they were replaced by Lord Wellesley and Sir T. Hobhouse, who in a few months made way for Mr. Littleton. Anglesey was recalled without receiving any office or honours, but Stanley's talents were too brilliant to be dispensed with, and he was promoted to the office of Colonial Secretary.[2]

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[1] *Doyle*, ii. 385-99.
[2] *Ibid.* 313, 460.
[3] Mitchel's *History of Ireland*, ii. 178.
[4] *Personal Recollections*, pp. 366, 437-8, 440, 442, 450-51.
[5] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 331.

In Ireland he had given great offence by his bitter personal attacks on O'Connell and by his partiality for Coercion and Orange ascendancy. And yet it would be unjust to deny that in what he did for primary education he went far beyond any of his predecessors, and conferred a real boon on the masses of the people. Seeing the utter failure of the Charter Schools to educate the Catholics, and believing that some education should be provided for them, some well-intentioned Protestants had, nearly twenty years previously, established a Society at Kildare Street, Dublin, the object of which was to promote the secular education of the lower classes, leaving their religious education in the hands of the ministers of the different churches. O'Connell favoured the Society and became a member of the Board, and for many years it received a grant from Parliament. But gradually it fell into the hands of bigots and fanatics, who wished that the Bible without note or comment should be taught in every school. The result was that the Catholics ceased to frequent the Society Schools, and even fair-minded Protestants refused to identify themselves with the agents of Bible Societies and proselytizing institutions. Withdrawing all Government grants from the Society, Stanley had the Irish

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[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, i. 331.

[2] *Greville's Memoirs*, ii. 374, 380-81.

National Education Act passed, under which the Viceroy set up a National Education Board, representative of all creeds, and under which children of all creeds were to be educated. No payment was to be given for religious teaching, but such teaching was not disallowed, and indeed was encouraged, though never to be given during the time set apart for secular teaching.[1] For many years the representation of the Catholics on the Board was inadequate;[2] yet it was much to have Parliament recognize that Catholics ought to be educated at the expense of the State, and without any compromise of their faith; and the system was tolerated rather than welcomed by the Catholic clergy as an advance towards justice and fair-play.[3]

Between the new Chief Secretary and the new Viceroy the relations were more cordial than those which had existed between Stanley and Anglesey. Wellesley, whose son-in-law Littleton was, had no sympathy with Orange intolerance, and thought it hard that no serious effort had hitherto been made to have Catholic Emancipation a reality; and Littleton was no believer in Coercion, and was in high favour with O'Connell. Had his hands been free he would certainly have introduced measures of reform; but such measures could not be passed by a Government in which Stanley and men like him held commanding positions. Something was urgently needed in the matter of tithes, for their execution was the main reason why the state of Ireland was one of suppressed war;[4] and when Littleton introduced a Bill (May 1834) commuting tithes into a land tax amounting to 80 per cent of the tithe, even Stanley supported the measure. But on a further motion of the Government to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the revenues of the Irish Church and the number of its members compared with the whole population, he and those of his colleagues in the Ministry resigned—the Duke of Richmond, Lord Ripon and Sir James Graham.[5]

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[1] Stanley's letter to the Duke of Leinster, giving an outline of the scheme, October 1831 (*Halliday Pamphlets*, No. 1536).

[2] *MacHale's Letters*, pp. 393-400.

[3] *Ibid.* 410.

[4] G. C. Lewis's *Local Disturbances in Ireland*, p. 176.

[5] *Greville*, iii. 90.

A month later the question ot renewing Stanley's Coercion Act of the preceding year was considered. Wellesley, who at first favoured the re-enactment of the whole measure, saw reason to change his mind, and subsequently advised dropping the public meeting clauses; and his later view was strongly supported by Lords Althorp, Brougham and Melbourne, as well as by Mr. Littleton. But Grey, who was as violent a coercionist as Stanley, would have the whole Bill and insisted on its introduction.[1]

In the meantime O'Connell, who had been vigorously agitating the question of repeal, was induced by Littleton to moderate his activity, and had been assured that only a mild Coercion Bill would be introduced. When Grey brought in the harsher measure, O'Connell, believing he had been deceived, told the House of Commons of the assurances he had received. Littleton tried to explain and then tendered his resignation, which Grey refused to accept; while Grey himself, disgusted at these negotiations carried on behind his back, resigned office, and Lord Althorp followed Grey.[2] The King was anxious to have a Coalition Ministry under Lord Melbourne, but as this was found impossible, Melbourne formed a Whig Ministry, in which Althorp reluctantly consented to hold office.[3] A few months later, however (November 1834), Althorp succeeded his father as Earl Spencer and went to the House of Lords; and the King, tired of the Whigs, summarily dismissed Melbourne and called the Tories to office under Peel.[4] After the General Election which followed in January 1835, O'Connell held the balance of power.[5] He had aided the Whigs at the polls, and he now joined with them in driving Peel from office;[6] and then, sustained by him, Melbourne became Prime Minister, and retained power for six years.

In the meantime one notable figure passed away in Ireland in the person of Dr. Doyle, Bishop of Kildare. He died young, being only forty-eight years old at his death in 1834; but he had already acquired enduring fame—such fame as had not been acquired by an Irish Churchman since the days of St. Malachy. His private life was that of an exemplary Christian, full of piety and charity and religious zeal; his episcopal rule was marked by prudence and justice. But though scrupulously exact in the discharge of his ecclesiastical duties, he did not hesitate to enter the domain of politics, and during the fifteen years that he was Bishop there were few public questions which did not attract some illuminating contribution from his pen. Nor was he fearful of incurring unpopularity, but fearlessly spoke out what he considered best for his country and Church. By frequently and fiercely denouncing Secret Societies, he incurred the displeasure of many who looked to Parliament with despair;[1] he was not averse to mixed education;[2] in opposition to the views of his Episcopal brethren, he joined the Catholic Association when it had few friends;[3] though he opposed the Veto, he was willing to consent to other securities,[4] which most of his countrymen would not grant; and he favoured a poor law,[5] and opposed repeal,[6] in spite of the opposition of O'Connell. Sometimes he earned praise from those in power, though he never sought it or wished it; and no indictment of Irish government could be more scathing than that contained in his letters on the state of Ireland. Friends and enemies acknowledged the purity of his motives; and the vast knowledge and commanding ability he displayed before two Parliamentary Committees created a profound impression and extorted admiration from his bitterest foes.[7]

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[1] Bryce, p. 335; *Lord Hatherton's* (*Littleton's*) *Memoirs*, pp. 8-10, 13-14, 38.

[2] *Greville*, iii. 105-7, 113; *Hatherton*, pp. 57, 61-63.

[3] *Greville*, iii. 114, 116.

[4] *Ibid.* 148-51.

[5] *Ibid.* 261.

[6] *Ibid.* 246.

To find a successor to such a man was difficult, but one was found in Dr. MacHale, for some years Bishop of Killala, and who, the same year in which Doyle died, became Archbishop of Tuam. His intellect was not less powerful than Doyle's, his knowledge not less extensive, his political views not less sound, and he was equally without fear. His style of writing, indeed, was without the lightness and grace of Doyle's, and he appealed with less effect to the prejudices of the English ruling classes. But, on the other hand, he surpassed Doyle in influence with the masses of his countrymen, he reached their level with greater ease, and when he opposed O'Connell, as he sometimes did, he was a more dangerous opponent than Doyle had ever been. Usually, indeed, he acted with the great agitator, who always treated him with profound respect and was profoundly grateful for his assistance. But MacHale was out of sympathy with O'Connell's policy during the Melbourne administration, and no entreaty and no arguments could change his views, or extort approval where he so strongly disapproved.

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[1] Fitzpatrick's *Life of Doyle*, i. 204-5, ii. 329-30, 409-10.

[2] *Ibid.* i. 10.

[3] *Ibid.* i. 282.

[4] *Ibid.* i. 167, 173.

[5] *Ibid.* ii. 207-12, 285-8, 366-72.

[6] *Ibid.* ii. 230.

[7] *Ibid.* i. 402-4, ii. 385-99, 403-6.

The position was certainly peculiar and might well have caused two able and far-seeing Irishmen to differ as to the best policy to be pursued. In the House of Commons the Tories had a compact and a homogeneous party of more than 260, led with consummate ability by Peel; while in the House of Lords, under Wellington, they were in a permanent majority. Though Wellington had granted Emancipation in 1829, he had ever since endeavoured to spoil the happy and healing effects of the measure by patronizing and sustaining Orange ascendancy; and Lyndhurst, who was a much abler political leader, vehemently declared that the Irish were not entitled to the same rights as Englishmen, for they were "aliens in blood, language and religion." Had the Tories been as numerous as the Whigs, it is hard to say how far they might have gone in order to purchase the support of O'Connell, for an English party has always been ready to sacrifice much for office. Nor would O'Connell, being a practical politician, have rejected concessions from them, and would have been quick to see the advantage of an alliance with a party which could at all times obtain a smooth passage for its measures through the House of Lords. But an alliance with the Tories being out of the question, he turned to the Whigs, and here too there were difficulties. The Whigs, unlike the Tories, were not a homogeneous party.

A few followed the lead of Stanley, who on Irish questions was much more of a Tory than Peel, and considered any interference with the Irish Church as nothing less than a sacrilege. The more moderate Whigs looked to Grey for a leader—a man whose Irish record was especially bad, and who was especially obnoxious to O'Connell. Lastly, there was the main body of Whigs and all the Radicals ready to follow Melbourne and coalesce with O'Connell on the basis of granting concessions to Ireland.[1] All these parties, however, whether Whig or Tory, were determinedly opposed to Repeal, and when O'Connell brought forward his Repeal motion in 1834, only one English member voted with him, his motion being rejected by 523 to 38 votes.[2]

The new Parliament opened in February 1835, and Peel, though in a minority, determined to continue in office. One of his first measures was an Irish Tithe Commutation Bill, making tithes payable as a rent charge amounting to 75 per cent of the tithe. It would have been well if O'Connell had allowed the Bill to pass, for Ireland would then have been saved further years of bloodshed and strife. But he had set his heart on having the surplus revenues of the Irish Church devoted to purposes of education, and as Peel's Bill contained no appropriation clause, he opposed it. He was joined by the Whigs, with the result that on the question of appropriation Peel was repeatedly defeated, and in the following April resigned, being succeeded by Lord Melbourne.[3] The coalition thus formed against Peel was the result of an arrangement entered into by O'Connell and the Whig leaders earlier in the year. It was often called the Lichfield House Compact, because the meetings were held at Lichfield House, though Lord John Russell repudiated the word "compact" and described the arrangement as an "alliance on honourable terms of mutual co-operation." But whether it be called a compact or an alliance matters little: there was certainly an understanding, there were mutual promises made and mutual obligations incurred. On his side O'Connell was to cease agitating repeal. On the other side the Whigs were to settle the question of tithes and with an appropriation clause; the Irish municipal corporations were to be reformed; there was to be no coercion, no interference with the right of public meetings, and Irish administration in all its branches was to be purified.[1] O'Connell himself was anxious to get the position of Attorney-General for Ireland, but the King would on no account consent to give him office.[2] He had, however, the satisfaction of seeing Lord Mulgrave, an advanced Liberal, appointed Viceroy, and Lord Morpeth Chief Secretary, his friend Mr. Perrin Attorney-General, and his friend and co-religionist, Mr. O'Loughlin, Solicitor-General. And it pleased him much that while his friend Lord Duncannon was in the Cabinet, both Stanley and Lord Grey were excluded.[3]

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[1] *Greville*, iii. 242, 247.

[2] Bryce, *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 329.

[3] *Greville*, iii. 253.

About passing a Tithe Bill there were special difficulties. The Tories, having been driven from office on the question of appropriation, felt bound to continue their opposition, and they were backed by the House of Lords. The Whigs, having refused to accept a mere Commutation Bill—without appropriation—felt bound with O'Connell to insist on the larger measure, and each year a Tithe Bill with an appropriation clause passed the Commons, only to have the clause expunged in the House of Lords. And meanwhile the iniquitous system under which so much turbulence arose and so many lives were lost continued. At last the spirit of party gave way to the spirit of justice, and Whigs and Tories, weary of the struggle, agreed. O'Connell and the Whigs gave up appropriation, and a Tithe Commutation Bill passed, under which tithes became a rent charge amounting to 75 per cent of the existing tithe composition.[4] Two years later a Municipal Reform Bill became law. Year after year the Bill was introduced and year after year it was

[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 1-12.

[2] *Greville*, iii. 258; *Melbourne's Memoirs*, ii. 118-21.

[3] *Melbourne's Memoirs*, ii. 128-9.

[4] Bryce, pp. 362-3.

opposed by Peel in the Commons, and thrown out or amended out of existence in the Lords. In neither House could any defence be made of the existing corporations, which were known to be centres of bigotry and corruption, of peculation and plunder. At last a Reform Bill was passed in 1840, but not one similar to that which had been passed for England. The franchise was fixed at £10; the corporations could not appoint their Sheriffs nor control the police, and a number of the smaller corporations were abolished.[1]

One other remedial measure was the Poor Law Act of 1838. A Poor Law Commission in 1836 had reported that out of a population of 8,000,000, nearly 2,500,000 were for six months in each year on the verge of starvation,[2] so that obviously some form of State relief was necessary. But O'Connell was reluctant to have any such measure. He thought the relief of the poor ought to be left to private benevolence and Christian charity, and that between the destitute who suffered and those who pitied and sympathized and were ready to aid it was wrong for the State to intervene.[3] Dr. Doyle, on the contrary, advocated the striking of a poor rate in each parish, but only as a supplement to private charity, and he would have this administered by the clergy and other representative men of the parish, who would be then able to detect undeserving applicants.[4] Dr. MacHale favoured relief in the shape of public and useful works such as the reclamation of water-lands. Dr. Whateley was opposed to workhouses.[5] All were opposed to the introduction of the English system of Poor Law. Yet it was the English system which was introduced. Workhouses to the number of 130, one for each Union, were built and within a few years opened. These workhouses in too many cases were the scenes of sectarian strife and attempted proselytism; they became the homes of pampered and highly-paid officials; and side by side with the

[1] Bryce, pp. 364-5.

[2] *O'Connell's Speeches*, i. 494.

[3] *Speeches*, i. 453-6, 490-514; *Correspondence*, ii. 127, 129.

[4] *Letters on the State of Ireland*, Letters xi. and xii.; *Life*, ii. 285-6, 362.

[5] *Life*, i. 199-200, 395-6

destitute and deserving poor grew up the idle, the lazy, the vicious and the immoral.

These three measures, meagre, miserable and grudging, were all the legislative concessions that came to Ireland from the Lichfield House Compact; and when it is remembered that the alliance lasted for six years, it cannot be denied that the tree which had promised so much fruit had borne but little.

Much better work was done in changing the character of Irish administration. O'Connell's main anxiety was that the Orangemen should cease to rule Ireland; and the Orangemen, on their side, were so disgusted at his friendship with the new Viceroy that they derisively called the latter the O'Mulgrave. They had, however, much more to fear from the new Under-Secretary, Mr. Drummond. His appointment had been suggested by the Attorney-General, Mr. Perrin, who pointed out to Lord Mulgrave that, as there was to be change of system, there ought to be a change of men; and accordingly Sir William Gosset, the Under-Secretary, became in 1835 Sergeant-at-Arms, and Mr. Drummond took his place. He was a Scotchman not quite forty years of age, and had formerly been an officer in the Engineers, then for some years attached to the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, and subsequently private secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Althorp.[1] During his stay in Ireland he had learned to love its people, and he eagerly seized the opportunity of serving them. He was a man of fine capacity, of tireless energy, devoted to the public service, conscientious in the discharge of his duties, thinking clearly, seeing far, heedless of clamour, indifferent to applause, a man just, firm, fearless and strong, of iron determination and inflexible will. He found in Ireland, which was overwhelmingly Catholic, that Catholics were excluded from all honours and offices. Mr. O'Loughlin was the first Catholic who became Solicitor-General, and the first Catholic Judge since the days of James II.[2] Every position of influence and profit was in the hands of Protestants—not the tolerant or fair-minded Protestants who wished to live at peace with their Catholic neighbours, but rather those who belonged to the Orange Society, militant, aggressive, intolerant, regarding every Catholic as an enemy, and seeming to have no higher ambition than to imbrue their hands in Catholic blood. In 1827 both the Catholic Association and the Orange Society were suppressed, but the latter had been revived and was now more active than ever. It had its affiliated lodges, its oaths and pass-words and signs, its elaborate ritual, which was a curious compound of love and hate, of Christian piety and ferócious bigotry.[1] These Orangemen frequently paraded in ordered masses, with bands and banners and drums, playing such provocative party airs as the Protestant Boys, the Boyne Water and Croppies Lie Down. Their orators insulted the Pope and ridiculed Catholic doctrines; they gloried in the name of William III., and taunted the Catholics with the memory of Protestant victories and Catholic defeats. Not infrequently they wrecked Catholic houses, destroyed Catholic property, and wantonly sacrificed Catholic lives. Nor had the aggrieved Catholics any redress. The Constabulary, the Yeomanry, the Army were manned by Orangemen. The rural magistrates were recruited from the Orange lodges; Orange High Sheriffs took care to empannel only Protestant juries; the high officials were Orangemen; and the Catholic who appealed from an inferior to a superior Court had in some cases but a small chance of justice from the ermine-clad Orangeman on the Bench. To such an extent was Orange intolerance carried that the Protestant police who did their duty fairly were denounced by the lodges, as were those who favoured Reform or Catholic Emancipation; and one Orangeman was expelled from his lodge because he had entertained O'Connell at breakfast.[2]

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[1] *Life of Drummond*, pp. 65-66.

[2] *Melbourne*, ii. 203-4.

Nor was the Orange Society the only source from which trouble came and anxiety rose. Factions were still prevalent and often led to serious breaches of the peace. The neglect of

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[1] *Melbourne*, ii. 102-7.

[2] O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 110-24, 128-32.

Parliament and the unrestrained violence of the Orangemen strengthened the hands of the Secret Societies; and the Ribbonmen, absorbing the other societies, had grown to formidable dimensions.[1] The high rents paid to the landlords while prices were inflated during the great war were still exacted, though prices had fallen heavily with the fall of Napoleon. Grasping and unfeeling parsons would have their tithes from poverty-stricken peasants, whose stomachs cried out for food and whose bodies were clothed in rags. The people led by O'Connell and Dr. MacHale refused to pay, conflicts ensued and blood was shed, and in the end of 1834 the tithe battle of Rathcormack recalled and exceeded the horrors of Newtownbarry and Carrickshock.[2]

To grapple with all these difficulties was a task from which even Hercules might have recoiled. But Drummond was not dismayed, and gathering into his hands the threads of Irish government, he manfully girded himself for the struggle. In spite of Orange clamour he put Catholics on the Bench and in the Privy Council. He appointed Catholics and Liberal Protestants as Sheriffs, who ceased to pack the juries with Orangemen. He made a personal appeal to the factions to cease their faction fights, and with good results;[3] and his evident determination to do justice had a soothing effect on the Ribbonmen.[4] He disbanded the Orange Yeomanry and had an Act of Parliament passed taking appointments to the Constabulary force out of the hands of Orange local magistrates, and thus enabling Catholics to enter its ranks. With a strong hand he put down Orange processions,[5] censured or dismissed officials who indulged in Orange bravado, and when a bellicose Orange colonel named Verner toasted the battle of the Diamond at an election dinner, and insolently refused either to apologize or explain, Drummond had him promptly dismissed from the commission of the peace and struck off the list of Deputy-Lieutenants for Tyrone.[6]

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[1] O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 94, 248-9.

[2] *Ibid.* 78-87.

[3] *Ibid.* 247-8.

[4] *Ibid.* 249-50.

[5] *Ibid.* 129, 232, 237-8.

[6] *Ibid.* 259, 264.

He refused to give the aid of police in the collection of tithes: their duty was to keep the peace; and when it was sought to have his action declared illegal, even the House of Lords was unable to pronounce against him.[1] The landlords were as enraged as the parsons when they were refused the police in serving processes and recovering rent. They were disgusted when they found their cry for Coercion remained unheeded. And the Tipperary magistrates, who joined loudly in their cry, because of a recent murder in their midst, were horrified when Drummond told them that "property has its duties as well as its rights; to the neglect of these duties in times past is mainly to be ascribed that diseased state of society in which such crimes take their rise, and it is not in the enactment or enforcement of statutes of extraordinary severity, but chiefly in the better and more faithful performance of these duties, and the more enlightened and humane exercise of these rights, that a permanent remedy for such diseases is to be sought."[2]

This policy of justice and conciliation was assailed in both Houses of Parliament in 1837, and an attempt was made to exhibit Colonel Verner as a martyr to liberty and conviction. But a Select Committee had already, in 1835, inquired into the character and objects of the Orange Society, and had discovered that efforts were being made to spread the organization throughout Great Britain; that wherever it appeared it had stirred up sectarian rancour;[3] worst of all, its chief emissary appeared to have had the design of dethroning the King and putting the Duke of Cumberland in his place. In 1836 Lord John Russell got the unanimous consent of the House to his motion asking the King to discourage the society, and all other societies of a similar character, and the King readily consented to do so.[4] The Orange Society of Great Britain then dissolved, the Irish one continued as a system of unaffiliated lodges, but few were ready to defend it, and even Peel with all his love for the ascendancy faction was unwilling to clasp Colonel

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[1] O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 223, 273.

[2] *Ibid.* 273-87, 284.

[3] *Ibid.* 183-6, 193-5.

[4] *Ibid.* 216-17.

Verner to his bosom. Nor did Verner's champion in the Lords, the Earl of Roden, succeed in winning the assent of his fellow-peers, for their attack was effectually repelled by Lords Mulgrave and Melbourne.[1]

Two years later the attack was renewed. Lord Norbury, son of the infamous Chief-Justice, himself an inoffensive man, was murdered in Tipperary, nor could his murderers be discovered. The Tories laid the blame in Drummond's famous letter to Lord Donoughmore, and railed at the insolence of this Jack-in-office who presumed to lecture the landlords of Tipperary.[2] The ascendancy faction in the House of Commons was not less violent, and assailed both Drummond and O'Connell. Lord Morpeth in a closely-reasoned speech easily disposed of their charges, and O'Connell in a powerful speech covered them with ridicule and contempt, pointing them out with scorn as men who came to Parliament to vilify their native land.[3] The House of Lords, however, was more sympathetic, and Lord Roden had a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland since 1835.[4] Drummond's health was then indifferent, and his friends advised him to ignore the Lords' Committee. But he would face his accusers, and for seven days he was under examination. Calmly, truthfully, without an atom of passion, he gave his evidence; and when the long examination was over it was the Lords who had been vanquished, and it was Drummond who had triumphed.[5]

It was the last triumph of his life. His constitution had never been very strong, and serious inroads had been made on it by the constant personal attention to every detail of Irish administration. But not only did he fight the Orangemen and the Ribbonmen, and jealously watch the tithe-proctor and the landlord; he also studied the question of Irish poverty, and sought for it a permanent remedy.

In 1836 a Royal Commission, of which he was a member, was appointed to consider the means of establishing railway communication throughout Ireland, and two years later it issued its report.[1] Seeing the vast numbers of the Irish who were ever on the verge of famine, without either land or labour to sustain them, Drummond foresaw that a crisis would arise with which the Poor Law would be unable to cope. In the Commission Report, largely written by him, he suggested that public works such as the reclamation of waste lands should be set on foot, and further that railways should be built. To carry out this last recommendation Lord Morpeth, in 1837, introduced a Bill to expend £2,500,000 in the building of Irish railways, to be managed and owned by the State. But the Tories defeated the measure, to the annoyance of Drummond, every moment of whose spare time the Railway Commission had absorbed, and the work of which certainly shortened his days. His health failing early in 1840, he took a short vacation, but he quickly returned to his work, and continued working till his strength was gone. In April a throat affection came on, peritonitis supervened, and on the 15th of April, before most of the people had been made aware of his illness, Drummond breathed his last. Just before the closing scene his physician asked where he wished to be buried, and the dying statesman murmured: "I wish to be buried in Ireland, the country of my adoption, a country which I loved, which I have faithfully served, and for which I believe I have sacrificed my life."[2]

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[1] O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 268-9.

[2] *Ibid.* 321-2.

[3] *Ibid.* 322-7.

[4] *Ibid.* 327-34.

[5] *Ibid.* 339-54.

In the presence of death the strident notes of faction were at last hushed; even his bitterest enemies spoke of him with respect; and the Press of all shades of opinion unanimously declared that the world had lost one of its great men. The Irish peasant, so long accustomed to see an enemy at Dublin Castle, regarded him with something like affectionate awe. O'Connell mingled with the mourners who followed his remains to Mount Jerome. A people to whom his memory is still dear were determined that their gratitude should take concrete form, and the sculptured figure of Drummond stands in the

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[1] O'Brien's *Life of Drummond*, pp. 289-314.

[2] *Ibid.* iii. 54-55; Greville, iv. 30-31.

THEOBALD WOLFE TONE

ROBERT EMMET

THOMAS DAVIS

DR. DOYLE

BISHOP OF KILDARE AND LEIGHLIN

Dublin City Hall with those of Lucas and Grattan and O'Connell. And surely it would have been well for the good name of England had she sent across the Channel many other administrators like this great and just man, who was at once a blessing to Ireland and a glory and an honour to his own beloved Scotland.

His death hastened the dissolution of the Lichfield House Compact. In England that Compact had never been popular. It was denounced by the *Times*[1] and the Tories; it was disliked even by the Whigs, who socially ostracized O'Connell.[2] In Ireland Drummond's administration had the warm approval of the people, but they were disappointed at the little done for them in Parliament. The Poor Law Act was disliked by many, the Municipal Act by all, and Dr. MacHale wanted the abolition rather than the commutation of tithes.[3] O'Connell, in 1838, had refused the Irish Mastership of the Rolls—"he had not the heart to desert Ireland";[4] but Dr. MacHale wished him to desert the Whigs and adopt a policy of independent opposition.[5] The great agitator became depressed. His wife died in 1836; the next year he was worried with election petitions, set on foot for the purpose of annoying and impoverishing him by a rich Tory clique in England nicknamed the Spottiswoode Gang.[6] Dr. MacHale's disapproval so added to his chagrin that he complained of having lost the confidence of his countrymen, declared he was miserably unhappy, and talked of retiring from public life and ending his days at Clongowes Wood College.[7] This melancholy mood soon passed away, and he continued to support the Whigs as long as they remained in office. But this was not for long. In 1835 in alliance with the Irish they had a good working majority. At the General Election in 1837, which followed the death of King William and the accession of Victoria, the Irish maintained their strength, but the Whigs lost ground ; the loss of several by-elections still further weakened them, and two years later they felt unable to continue in office.[1]

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[1] M'Donagh's *O'Connell*, pp. 254-6, 280-83, 380-84.

[2] *Melbourne's Memoirs*, ii. 119-20. "The support of O'Connell was fatal to the English Whigs with the English Protestant middle classes" (Thursfield's *Peel*, p. 160).

[3] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 91-96.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 143-4; Melbourne, ii. 256-7.

[5] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, pp. 164, 173-5.

[6] *Ibid.* iii. 54-55; Greville, iv. 30-31.

[7] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 193-7.

Melbourne was then succeeded by Peel, but the latter quarrelled with the Queen about the ladies of her household, and Melbourne returned to office.[2] The following year Melbourne was defeated on a question of Irish registration.[3] The next year (1841) he was repeatedly defeated on the same question, and when these reverses were followed by a still greater defeat on the sugar duties, and this latter by a defeat on a motion of want of confidence, Melbourne dissolved, and having been beaten at the polls, Peel took office.

After six years the Whigs were out and the Tories in, and the Lichfield House Compact was at an end.

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[1] *Greville's Memoirs*, iv. 209-12.

[2] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 177-8 ; *Melbourne's Memoirs*, ii. 300-306.

[3] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 327-8.

CHAPTER VII

The Repeal Agitation

NO part of Ireland was more vehemently opposed to the Union than Dublin, and this without distinction of creed. The Catholics were indignant that even some of their co-religionists supported the measure, and in January 1800 an exclusively Catholic meeting was held in Dublin, at which strong language was used. O'Connell declared, amid the rapturous applause of the whole assembly, that even if Emancipation followed a Union, and was its price, the Catholics would spurn it; that if the alternative were offered them of a Union or the re-enactment of the Penal Code, they would select the latter; that they would prefer to confide in the justice of the Protestants of Ireland, who had already liberated them, than lay their country at the feet of foreigners.[1] This was good political strategy, likely to bring Protestants and Catholics together in defence of Irish liberty. O'Connell knew well that no Parliament, English or Irish, would dare to re-enact the Penal Code; and it was his conviction through life that the Union was an evil for Ireland, and that under an Irish Parliament, even with all its corruption and all its bigotry, Ireland would be more prosperous than under any Parliament sitting in England. He regarded the abolition of the Irish Parliament as the extinction of Ireland's separate national existence; he was maddened at hearing the bells of St. Patrick's Church ring out a peal of gladness when the Act of Union became law; and he vowed that the work then done should, if it lay in his power, be undone.[2]

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[1] *O'Connell's Speeches*, i. 8-9.

[2] Dunlop's *O'Connell*, p. 19.

For the time, however, he was powerless ; the Union was passed, and no one was found to demand its repeal. But when an aggregate meeting of Dublin citizens made such a demand in 1810, O'Connell attended and spoke eloquently, describing the means by which the Union was passed in vigorous terms.[1] Three years later, when Peel was attacking the Catholic Board, O'Connell's consolation was that their violence would advance the cause of Repeal ; and when the long struggle for Emancipation was over in 1829, he again rejoiced that with the settlement of the Catholic question the time had come to begin in earnest the struggle for popular rights, by which he meant the struggle for Repeal.[2]

During the second Clare Election he attacked the disfranchisement of the 40s. freeholders, the Grand Jury jobbery in the counties, the partial administration of the law, the iniquities of the Church establishment. After the election, he passed to the greater question of the Union, and in speech after speech throughout Ireland he announced that his great object was to repeal that accursed measure, which had degraded Ireland to the rank of a province, and made her " a dependent upon British aristocracy, British intrigue and British interests." In these speeches, and in a series of public letters written in the autumn and winter of the same year, he asked the assistance of all Irishmen, without distinction of creed—the Orangemen, the Methodist, the " unpresuming Quaker "—and he was confident that with such unity the Union must be repealed. The response of the Catholics was prompt, but the Orangemen were not to be persuaded. Disgusted with Emancipation because it had placed the Catholics, even in theory, on a level with themselves, they still continued their party processions and provocative speeches ; and the Catholics resenting these insults, there were throughout Ireland many collisions between the opposing parties, with consequent loss of lives.[3]

Outside the Orange lodges there were Protestants who disliked the Union; but there were few who wished to place themselves under a Catholic leader. The majority thought that the success of the Repeal movement under O'Connell would mean the establishment of a Catholic ascendancy; enough, they thought, had been done for the Catholics by the concession of Emancipation, and all further Catholic demands ought to be strictly resisted. It was this view which found favour with the Government, and one after another of O'Connell's associations were proclaimed. The Society for the Improvement of Ireland, The Friends of Ireland of all Religious Denominations, The Irish Society for Legal and Legislative Relief, The Irish Volunteers of 1782 followed each other in rapid succession in 1830; but the existence of each was cut short by a Viceregal proclamation. And when the Tories were succeeded by the Whigs in the last days of the year, the policy of suppression was continued. Indeed, the Whig Chief-Secretary, Stanley, was a far more determined coercionist, as well as being a far abler man, than his predecessors. In 1831 he had proclaimed O'Connell's new Association "to prevent unlawful meetings," and when the Irish leader invited his friends to a series of public dinners at Holmes's Hotel in Dublin, the result was the proclamation of the dinners and the prosecution of himself.[1] His further attempts in the same year to promote a repeal agitation were frustrated by the suppression of "The National and Political Union" and then "The Trades Political Union";[2] and for his support of the Whigs and the Reform Bill his only reward was the Coercion Act of 1833, the most savage enactment of the kind since the Union was passed.

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[1] *Speeches*, i. 17-24.

[2] Dunlop, p. 222.

[3] *Annual Register for 1829*, pp. 125-7, 129-31 ; M'Donagh's *O'Connell*, pp. 207-9.

But in spite of the opposition of the Orangemen, the distrust of the Protestants, and the prosecutions of the Government, the Repeal movement gained strength, and at the General Election in the end of 1832, no less than 40 Repealers were returned to Parliament. O'Connell's three sons and his two sons-in-law were elected. These were often called his "Household Brigade"; the whole party following him was derisively called by the *Dublin Evening Post* "O'Connell's Tail," a term which soon obtained currency not only in Ireland but in Great Britain.[1]

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[1] *John O'Connell's Recollections*, i. 64-66.

[2] *Ibid.* 308-11; Shaw Lefevre's *Peel and O'Connell*, pp. 124-5.

If we except Shiel, the various members, the joints in the Tail as they were described, gave little evidence of any remarkable talent, and O'Connell easily towered above them all. Some of them were hard to manage, and not always reliable, and one of them, Fergus O'Connor, it was especially difficult to restrain. A landlord with little property, a barrister with little practice, with no political record, and no influential political connexions, and with little of the world's wealth, he yet succeeded in carrying the county of Cork against the most powerful territorial influence. He carried it by his audacity, by his dexterity in handling the voters, by a certain rude and wild eloquence, which especially appealed to the mob.[2] Naturally vain, his successes made him presumptuous; he mistook his fluency before the mob for the eloquence of statesmanship; disdained to play a secondary part even to O'Connell, and aspired to become himself the leader of the Repeal movement. In the session of 1833 he insisted that the question must be at once brought before Parliament. O'Connell said that the time was inopportune, that Repeal had yet made little progress in Great Britain and none at all in Parliament; but O'Connor would not be persuaded, and was not without support among the newly-elected members. A compromise was effected under which O'Connell himself was to move in the session of 1834[3] for a Select Committee "to inquire and report on the means by which the dissolution of the Parliament of Ireland was effected, on the effects of that measure upon Ireland, and on the probable consequences of continuing the legislative union between both countries."

His speech took nearly six hours in delivery, and in the early portion, in which he went over Irish history previous to

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[1] Madden's *Ireland and its Rulers*, i. 230-31.

[2] *John O'Connell's Recollections*, i. 24-26; Madden, i. 174-84.

[3] Madden, i. 210-11.

1782, he was dry, wearisome and prolix. He had not much difficulty in showing that Ireland prospered from 1782 to 1800, even under a corrupt Parliament, nor had he in describing the infamous means by which the Union was passed. He was here going over well-trodden ground. Everything that could be said had been said during the Union debates, and in O'Connell's treatment of the subject there was nothing new. In going over the period since the Union, he was able by appealing to actual events to test the value of the prophecies made in 1800. Instead of the measure having given Ireland equal laws with England, he pointed out that for twenty out of the thirty-four years the Constitution had been suspended. The Union had increased absenteeism; it had increased taxation; it had made Ireland poorer, without enriching England; it had made her discontented and disaffected, and was yearly driving thousands of her children from her shores. The speech throughout was sober, temperate, argumentative—a carefully reasoned appeal to reasonable men. Shiel and Fergus O'Connor and others of the Repealers also spoke, but in no way strengthened the case made by O'Connell. An Irishman, Mr. Spring Rice, spoke officially for the Government, and in a speech as long as O'Connell's and not inferior in ability; Peel spoke for the Tories; but Whig and Tory joined in resisting the motion, and when the division took place there were but 38 for Repeal, while 523 were on the opposite side. Only one English member voted in the minority—Mr. Kennedy, who sat for Tiverton.[1]

While not expecting that his motion would have passed, O'Connell was so disappointed at the little support he received that he never again brought the question of Repeal before Parliament. And if Parliament had seriously taken in hand the various Irish grievances which clamoured loudly for redress, he would have ceased to agitate Repeal outside. "The people of Ireland," said Dr. MacHale, "do not care if the Parliament was in the moon provided they were well governed."[1] O'Connell knew this to be true; but he remembered the delay in granting Emancipation, and he could see that the British Parliament took little interest in Ireland and cared little for her wrongs. He was willing, however, to try what a professedly friendly Government could do, and for this reason he became a party to the Lichfield House Compact. The experiment was not very successful. Drummond's genius indeed did much for Irish administration; but five years' support of a Liberal Government brought Ireland nothing in enactments except the Tithes Commutation Act, the Poor Law Act and the Municipal Reform Act. Nor was it possible to get more from a hostile House of Lords, a strong Conservative opposition and a Liberal majority, in great part secretly insincere, and at best but lukewarm.

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[1] *O'Connell's Speeches*, edited by Miss Cusack, i. 366, 451; *Two Centuries of Irish History*, pp. 329-30; *John O'Connell's Recollections*, i. 81-96.

There were many who thought that O'Connell's close alliance with the Whigs was a mistake; that a more independent course would have produced better results; that a leader commanding since 1837 no less than 73 votes, and on whom the very existence of the Government depended, ought to have got substantial benefits for Ireland. But O'Connell clung tenaciously to the alliance, pleased that Drummond kept the Orangemen down, and that high legal offices were given to men with popular sympathies; and though he had himself refused the office of Master of the Rolls, he had got offices for some of his relatives and friends. Favours of this kind, however, were of no use to Ireland, and in 1839 Dr. MacHale advised O'Connell to break with the Whigs, and it was evident that the country was with MacHale.[2] At last O'Connell changed. Melbourne's Government was plainly tending towards dissolution; the Conservatives were plainly gaining ground and would soon come into office, to favour the Orangemen and resist reform; and once again O'Connell raised the standard of Repeal. In 1838 he had founded the Precursor's Society, to obtain corporate reform and the extension of the franchise,[1] and in 1840, despairing of the Whigs, he founded the Loyal National Repeal Association.

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[1] *Letters*, p. 324.

[2] *Correspondence of O'Connell*, ii. 164, 195.

While not engaged in Parliament or following his beagles for a short vacation over the mountains of Kerry, he was in Dublin, and week after week he attended Repeal meetings in the Repeal Rooms in Burgh Quay. As was his wont, he spoke eloquently and well, with all the old power of his wonderful voice, with flashes of humour lighting up his subject as he went along. He spoke of what Grattan's Parliament had done for Ireland, of the shameful means by which the Union was passed, of the miseries that had followed. He reminded his hearers that, when the majority in the British Parliament had voted down his Repeal motion in 1834, they had solemnly promised "to apply their best attention to the removal of all just causes of complaint, and to the promotion of all well-considered measures of improvement for the benefit of Ireland."[2] And he pointed out how even the Whigs had not carried out their promises. And now the Tories were in power. Lord de Grey was Viceroy, Lord Elliott was Chief Secretary, and an Englishman, Sir Edward Sugden, had been imported to fill the office of Lord Chancellor, and all these were enemies of the people.

But the new Association made little progress. O'Connell spoke the truth—he spoke as a great orator and a great Irishman, as the leader who had won Emancipation—but it seemed as if he spoke to a nation that would not heed, and was reluctant even to listen. The clergy on whom he so much relied were displeased with him, and did not care to follow him, for they wanted the abolition of tithes; and O'Connell had merely changed the payment from the parson to the landlord. The Bar, anxious for promotion, avoided an Association condemned by Government. The Catholic gentry, wanting favours and places and honours, would not break with Dublin Castle. The merchants held aloof, seeing no prospect in a renewal of agitation. The Orangemen were of course hostile, the Liberal Protestants distrustful. The Ulster Presbyterians under Sharman Crawford favoured a federal Home Rule and land reform, but thought that Repeal would involve separation from England. The Press of England of all shades was personally hostile to O'Connell. Even the National Press of Ireland was timid and nerveless. The masses of the people, remembering how O'Connell had abandoned the former agitation for Repeal in 1835, thought that a renewal of the agitation would be only the prelude to another collapse.[1] On every side there was doubt, hesitation, apathy and indifference. The voice of the great leader could charm no longer, and to such extent had the Whigs gained ground in Ireland, and to such extent had the cause of Repeal receded, that, in the General Election of 1841, only 12 Repealers were returned to Parliament.[2] Yet this wonderful old man of sixty-six did not despair in the midst of so much depression and gloom. Patiently, perseveringly, with grim tenacity and inflexible will, he continued his efforts —exhorting, arguing, convincing, strengthening the weak, encouraging the timid, confirming the strong, restraining the impetuous, assailing the enemy—never doubting that he would succeed; that when the people saw he was in earnest, a mighty Association would arise which would ensure the triumph of Repeal.

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[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 149-50.

[2] Duffy's *Young Ireland*, p. 12.

At last his patience was rewarded. In the autumn of 1842 three remarkable young men joined the Repeal Association and often attended its sparsely-attended meetings. These were Thomas Osborne Davis, John Blake Dillon and Charles Gavan Duffy. Davis and Dillon were barristers, but with little practice. Duffy had been assistant editor of a Dublin paper, and still later editor of a paper in Belfast. Davis was the oldest, and was but twenty-eight years of age, having been born in Mallow; Dillon was from Connaught;

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[1] Duffy's *Young Ireland*, chap. i.; *John O'Connell's Recollections*, i. 313-14; ii. 6-7.

[2] *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 377.

Duffy an Ulsterman. The two latter were Catholics; Davis was a Protestant, and in intellectual power, in force of character, in capacity for leadership, he was the ablest of the three. He was a poet, a philosopher, a historian, a man who had read much and thought much, tolerant, kindly, forbearing, with broad human sympathies and a passionate love for Ireland. Duffy had much of the practical good sense of his native Ulster—fine natural talents and a considerable power of literary expression. In this latter respect Dillon was his inferior, though his intellect was of a very high order. His motives were of the purest, his nature without guile, his ambition only to serve Ireland. The sufferings of his poorer countrymen went to his heart, and he longed to strike down the power which oppressed them. No more lovable character, none more respected, none more unselfish or courageous appeared in the public life of his time. All three — Davis especially — had profound admiration for O'Connell. But they disapproved of some of his methods and of some of his policy, of his partiality for the Whigs, of his personal dislike for the Tories,—especially for Wellington and Peel,—of his habit of grossly flattering his friends, and of his unmeasured abuse of those who for the moment were his opponents. Equally distrustful of both English parties, these young men—the Young Irelanders, as they came to be called—favoured more toleration in Ireland, so that by conciliation and forbearance all Irishmen might act together in demanding their rights from England, and not in the whining language of a beggar but in the manlier accents of the freeman. They wanted Irishmen to cultivate self-respect and self-reliance, to take a pride in their past, to recall the far distant times when Ireland was the School of the West, to learn the lesson that by disunion they had lost and by union everything could be won.

To give utterance to these thoughts a newspaper was necessary, and in the summer of 1842 Davis, Dillon and Duffy, under the shelter of an elm tree in the Phœnix Park, determined to found a newspaper. Duffy was named its editor, and the first number of the *Nation* was published in October 1842. Its motto was "to create and foster public opinion in Ireland and make it racy of the soil." Its vigour and freshness of style, its thoughtfulness, its manly tone were new in Irish journalism. From its pages thousands of Irishmen learned for the first time of Columbkille and Columbanus, of Duns Scotus and Erigena, of Bangor and Lismore. They were able to follow in the footsteps of the Wild Geese, to see Sarsfield fall at Landen, Mahony hold Cremona, and Lally charge at Fontenoy; or again to sit with Colgan in his study at Louvain. They learned something of Irish music, of Irish eloquence, of Irish valour; they learned to interpret the rath and dun, the broken arch and the ivy-clad ruin. And learning so much, they lifted up their heads and were proud of the land in which they were born. To the young men especially the new paper appealed, and in the University, in Maynooth, in the colleges and schools, it was welcomed with enthusiasm. In the country towns, in the farmers' homes it was read; and by the light of the village forge the smith paused from his anvil, and the villagers gathered round, while some one read out from the columns of the newly-arrived *Nation* its tales, its historical sketches, its stirring appeals. The *Times* and *Quarterly Review* recognized its literary ability. Irish exiles abroad sent their congratulations, foreign newspapers bade it welcome, and its articles were copied into the American newspapers all over the United States. Under its influence the Repeal Association grew rapidly, its meetings full, its weekly rent coming in by hundreds of pounds, and thus did a newspaper succeed where even the great agitator so far had failed.[1]

In the meantime O'Connell had been Lord Mayor of Dublin. The Corporation long manned by Orangemen had been radically changed by the Municipal Corporation Act of 1840, and in the end of 1841 O'Connell was elected Lord Mayor, the first Catholic who held the office since the days of James II. He declared that while in the Chair no one would know his politics; but when his year of office expired this attitude was abandoned, and in February 1843, as Alderman O'Connell, he brought forward in the Corporation a motion for Repeal. In a long speech occupying a whole day he was able to show that Ireland had a right to a native legislative, that this had been proved by the transactions of 1782, that the Union was not a valid contract and had brought disastrous results on Ireland, and that it could and ought to be abolished by peaceable and constitutional means. He had traversed this ground so often before that he was expected to be dry and uninteresting. But the power of a great orator and statesman asserted itself; he was neither dry nor tedious, and in freshness and vigour and convincing force the speech was one of the greatest of his life. Mr. Butt, a very able lawyer and very persuasive speaker, replied for the Opposition, but O'Connell's motion was carried, and the once Orange Corporation of Dublin resolved by 45 to 15 votes to petition Parliament for Repeal.[1]

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[1] *Young Ireland*, chap. i. 3, 5.

These proceedings greatly helped the Repeal movement, and the Repeal rent, which during 1842 did not exceed £100 a week, rose to more than £300 in the end of February 1843, advanced to nearly £700 by the end of April, and before the end of May as much as £2200 was received in a single week.[2]

From the beginning the Secretary of the Association was Mr. Ray—a man of methodical and orderly habits, with great powers of initiative and superintendence, and capable of attending to a great organization in all its details. There were General, Finance and Parliamentary Committees and various Sub-Committees; there were Repeal wardens in each parish, and there were three Repeal inspectors, one for each of the three southern provinces; and the clerical work of the Central Office at one time required the continued assistance of a staff of sixty clerks. The Association consisted of associates who paid 1s. a year, members who paid £1, and volunteers who paid £10 themselves, or had that amount paid by others.[3]

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[1] *Young Ireland*, chap. vi.; *John O'Connell's Recollections*, ii. 223-34.

[2] *Nation* newspaper.

[3] *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1917; Attorney-General's *Speech*, January 1844.

Dublin was from the outset the great stronghold of Repeal; but there were also Repealers all over the country, as well as in England and America, and after O'Connell's great speech at the Corporation the weekly meetings were always filled to overflowing. But O'Connell was not yet satisfied. He asked in the beginning of 1843 for 3,000,000 Repealers, and declared that with this number he would certainly carry Repeal;[1] and to spread the organization and give him the numbers he required, monster meetings were held all over Ireland in 1843.

The first of these was at Trim in March, the last in October at Mullaghmast, and between these dates nearly thirty meetings had been held. O'Connell himself usually attended. He declared he had lost confidence in the British Parliament as being unable to do justice to Ireland, and during the session of 1843 he kept away from London and devoted all his energies to the work of agitation at home. The priests were everywhere his organizers and assistants; the bishops, with the exception of Dr. Murray of Dublin and a few others, were also with him, and often attended his meetings. Not a few of the gentry also joined him, and the masses came from far and near to see the great agitator and hear the voice which to them was so dear. It was calculated that 100,000 attended the Repeal meeting at Mullingar in May; in the same month 500,000 attended the meeting at Cork; in June there were 300,000 at Kilkenny and 400,000 at Mallow, and in August nearly a million attended the great meeting at Tara.[2] These immense gatherings were under the most perfect control, listened patiently to the speakers and rapturously applauded O'Connell, and willingly acted on his advice to shun violence and outrage. Neither in going to the meetings nor in returning from them were there excesses; there was no outrage or crime, no drunkenness or disorder. Much of this was due to the Temperance movement, lately started by Father Mathew of Cork. Without great learning or eloquence this simple priest had preached the evils of intemperance with such effect that two millions of Irishmen had taken his total abstinence pledge. Brewers and distillers suffered severely, public-houses were closed, crime diminished, and for the first time vast masses of men came together and separated without lawlessness or disorder. These teetotallers with their bands and banners marched to the Repeal meetings and acted as O'Connell's policemen, and to them in large measure it was due that such discipline and order prevailed.

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[1] *Nation.*

[2] *John O'Connell's Recollections*, ii. 238-40.

The Government were perplexed. A Repeal Association such as that of 1842, whose members were few and whose meetings did not attract more than a few thousands, might be ignored, no matter how eloquent might be its leader, or how convincing the case he made; but an Association which counted its members by millions, and whose meetings were attended by hundreds of thousands, with such a newspaper as the *Nation* as its organ, and with such a leader as O'Connell, was too formidable to be neglected. The friends of the Union, recollecting how Peel had surrendered to agitation in 1829, dreaded that once again there might be a similar surrender, and in May Lord Roden asked in Parliament what the Government intended to do. Peel answered that he recognized the Repeal movement as a menace and an evil; that to maintain the Union he would use every resource placed in his hands by law, and if necessary seek for new and extraordinary powers; and he added that if any member from Ireland demanded Repeal, he would resist the demand even at the cost of civil war.[1] This strong language was followed up by vigorous action. The Arms Act, which was about to expire, was re-enacted with new and more stringent provisions, and the clauses prescribing domiciliary visits, on suspicion that arms were concealed, left the people at the mercy of Orange magistrates and the caprice of over-zealous police officials. The Irish Lord Chancellor undertook to declare that the Repeal Association was unlawful, and O'Connell and his son, Lord French and several members of Parliament were deprived of the Commission of the Peace because they had attended Repeal meetings.[2] All this, however, did not end the Repeal agitation or the troubles of the

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[1] *Young Ireland*, pp. 82-84.

[2] *Ibid.* 93.

Government. Even in the absence of O'Connell from Parliament the Arms Bill encountered fierce opposition. Mr. Shiel, Mr. Sharman Crawford, Lord Clements (heir to the earldom of Leitrim), aided by the English Radicals, opposed its second reading, fought it in Committee, clause by clause and line by line; and so prolonged and bitter was their opposition that nearly the whole session was wasted in having the measure passed into law.[1] The action of the Lord Chancellor found few defenders even among his own party. It was condemned by the Liberal leader, Lord John Russell; it was denounced by the Radicals and Irish Whigs; and as a protest Mr. Smith O'Brien, M.P. for Clare, Mr. Grattan, M.P. for Meath, Sir Richard Musgrave, Lord Cloncurry and many others resigned the Commission of the Peace. At public meetings O'Connell assailed the Lord Chancellor with unmeasured invective. He was an Englishman named Sugden, and O'Connell asked, amid the cheers and laughter of his audience, would any of them call a decent-looking pig by the name of Sugden?[2] To settle disputes that might arise among the people he established Courts of Arbitration, presided over by those who had been dismissed from or had resigned the Commission of the Peace, and under his advice these Courts were frequented and the ordinary Courts of Law shunned.

Nor did he cease to agitate Repeal. On the contrary, his language grew bolder and more defiant. Knowing that to discuss Repeal and petition Parliament were perfectly legal, and that no disorder had followed any Repeal meeting, he knew that a mere declaration of Peel was not law, and therefore he felt on safe ground when he attacked him. He had conquered him in 1829; he would conquer him now and make 1843 the Repeal year. It was true, public opinion in England was with the Ministry; but in France Ireland had many and powerful friends, and in the United States public meetings had been held, at which the leading public men had used words of warm friendship for Ireland and words of menace towards England.[3] O'Connell told Wellington and Peel that he was leader of

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[1] *Young Ireland*, pp. 99-101. [2] *Nation*. [3] *Young Ireland*, pp. 116-19.

8,000,000 men, and could not be put down;[1] he reminded them that a large proportion of the army were Irish and would not fight against their own country; and that large numbers of Irish in England would strike back if Ireland were wantonly assailed. If all the Repealers were trained they would be strong enough to conquer Europe. Yet he would cling to the Constitution as long as there was a rag of it left to cover him; he would assist no enemy of the Constitution, he would break no law; but if he were wantonly and illegally assailed he would not tamely submit; and if his enemies trampled on him it would be on his dead body, not on the living man.[2] The better to rouse his countrymen he held his Repeal meetings on historic ground. At Tara he recalled Ireland's ancient glory, for he stood where Irish kings once ruled; at Kilkenny he spoke of the butcheries of Cromwell; and at Mullaghmast, of the treacherous murder of so many Irish chiefs. Meanwhile the young men of the *Nation* newspaper poured forth defiance in impassioned song,[3] and meanwhile also the Ministry refused in Parliament a motion of Smith O'Brien to inquire into the state of Ireland. Instead of concession there was to be coercion. Troops were poured into Ireland, barracks were fortified, strategic positions occupied by the army as if war was to be begun. Once again, as in 1829, Peel and O'Connnell stood facing each other in anger and menace, but on this occasion events shaped themselves differently, for the victory was with Peel.

On Sunday the 8th of October the last monster meeting of the year was to be held at Clontarf. The battle-ground where Brian smote the Danes had been appropriately selected by O'Connell to hurl fresh defiance at his foes, and announce to his friends the speedy triumph of Repeal. But on Saturday the Government proclaimed the meeting, declaring that if attempted to be held it would be dispersed by force. Large bodies of troops occupied the neighbouring heights, the artillery was turned on the meeting-place, and the guns of the Pigeon House Fort swept the approaches from Dublin. O'Connell's position was perplexing. Had he not intended to offer resistance to Peel's attack he had no right to indulge in language of defiance, leaving the people under the impression that they must repel force by force. And on the other hand, had his language of defiance been sincere, he should have taught the people to be prepared. The fact was that he counted on a repetition of the events of 1829, forgetting that at that date England was divided on the Catholic question, while it was now united on the question of Repeal. His calculations were at fault, and he found himself in a position where he could neither advance without danger nor retreat without humiliation. There were many who thought he ought to have advanced. Legally he was entitled to hold his meeting, and, if interfered with, he could have tested the value of the Government proclamation in the Courts of Law. Even if the Government had contemplated massacre, only a few thousands, perhaps only a few hundreds, would have fallen—in which case the whole world would have cried shame on England; the English party, which favoured Concession though stopping short of Repeal, would have become all-powerful; and Peel and his Government would have been hurled from power. Had O'Connell himself fallen he would have fallen with honour, and the massacre of Clontarf would, in part at least, have prevented the horrors of the great famine. Such results, however, were out of the question with O'Connell as leader. He had a horror of violence, and thought that the greatest blessings of human liberty were not worth the shedding of a drop of blood, and he gave instant orders that the Government proclamation was to be obeyed. All through the night his messengers travelled, turning back those who were advancing to Clontarf, and when morning dawned it was the soldiers alone who held possession of the ancient battle-field.[1]

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[1] *Young Ireland*, pp. 82, 91. [2] *Ibid.* 101. [3] *Ibid.* 104-5.

Peel followed up his victory by prosecuting for conspiracy O'Connell, his son John, Mr. Gavan Duffy; Mr. Barret, editor of the *Pilot*; Dr. Gray, editor of the *Freeman's Journal*; two priests, Father Tyrrell and Father Tracy; the Secretary of the Association, Mr. Ray; and Mr. Tom Steele. In an indictment, which was long and elaborate and in parts neither clear nor intelligible, they were charged with attempting to intimidate Parliament by a display of physical force, with exciting discontent among the people and disaffection in the army, and with bringing the Courts of Law into contempt.

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[1] *Young Ireland*, pp. 132-7; Mitchel's *History of Ireland*, ii. 190-91.

The trial, which commenced in the middle of January, lasted for thirty days. The Attorney-General, Mr. Smith, and the Solicitor-General, Mr. Greene, in long and elaborate statements, examined every speech of the defendants, every article and letter in the newspapers, every ballad in the *Nation* for incriminating details. The jury was packed, so that every Catholic was excluded, and the Chief-Justice, Pennefather, forgetting that he was on the Bench, spoke as an advocate and a partisan. On O'Connell's side nothing was wanting in legal talent, and O'Connell, Shiel, Whiteside, Fitzgibbon and Henn were worthy of the Irish Bar in its palmiest days. Whiteside's speech was especially noticeable, being fully equal to the finest efforts of forensic eloquence either in Ireland or elsewhere.[1] But eloquence and legal skill were equally unavailing. In defending himself O'Connell preferred to address himself to the larger audience outside, which would be sure to read his speech in the newspapers. He turned with contempt from a partisan judge and a packed jury, treating both with scorn and defiance, expecting justice from neither; and his expectations were fully justified when a grossly partisan judicial charge was followed by a verdict of guilty from the jury. A motion for a new trial was soon after made and refused; and then, on the 30th of May 1844, the defendants were called up for sentence.[2]

The sentence was severe. O'Connell was to be imprisoned for twelve months, pay a fine of £2000, and give £5000 security to be of good behaviour for seven years. The other defendants were to be imprisoned for nine months, pay a fine of £50, and give security for £1000. One of O'Connell's friends in Court whispered that he was being punished for having preserved the country from civil war, and O'Connell himself felt it his duty to tell the judges that justice had not been done. The crowds around the Court and in the streets were deeply moved and difficult to restrain; but they took O'Connell's advice, and quietly went to their homes while the prisoners were driven off to Richmond prison. They were treated with every consideration, and suffered nothing but the loss of their liberty. They had good rooms, lived with their families, dined and breakfasted together, discussed public questions without hindrance, could see and entertain visitors, and write and read whatever they pleased. By the country outside they were regarded as martyrs and heroes—public meetings were held to denounce the trial, and public prayers were offered for their release, and especially for the safety of O'Connell.[1]

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[1] *Halliday Pamphlets* (Whiteside's Speech). [2] *Ibid.* pp. 1917-18.

It seemed useless to appeal to the House of Lords, yet it was done, and in September the appeal was heard. The ex-Attorney-General for England, Sir Thomas Wilde, led for O'Connell, the Tory Attorney-General for the Crown. The highest legal talent was engaged on both sides, and after the case had been fully argued, the Lords, by three to two, reversed the judgment of the Irish Court. The manner in which the jury had been empannelled was specially condemned by the Lord Chief-Justice, Lord Denman, who declared that if such fraudulent practices were allowed to pass, trial by jury would be "a delusion, a mockery and a snare."[2]

On the 14th of September, amid a scene of wild enthusiasm, O'Connell left the prison. Seated on a triumphal car, drawn by six white horses, he made his journey through the streets, followed by the Lord Mayor and Corporation, and by the Committee of the Repeal Association, and by ordered masses of men (some in vehicles, some on horseback, some on foot)—a crowd which stretched back for six miles, and was computed to number 200,000 men. All over the country bonfires blazed upon the hills, bands played, houses were illuminated, the streets were filled with cheering crowds intoxicated with joy because of the deliverance of the great chief who had led them so ably and so long.[1]

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[1] *Young Ireland*, pp. 174-83.

[2] *Halliday Pamphlets* (Lord Denman's Judgment).

O'Connell found that the Repeal Association had suffered nothing in his absence. When the Lord Chancellor had superseded the Repeal magistrates there were many important accessions to Repeal; among them Sir Coleman O'Loghlin, Sir Francis Brady, MacNevin, and Thomas O'Hagan, afterwards Lord Chancellor;[2] and fresh accessions had also come with the Government prosecutions, among them a brilliant Englishman, Frederick Lucas, and Mr. Smith O'Brien, M.P. for Clare. The latter, a descendant of the ancient Thomond Kings, was a Protestant and a Whig, and had opposed O'Connell in 1828, when he was elected for Clare. He was not an orator, but he had considerable ability, was cool and cautious, full of courage and resolution, and always ready to follow where his convictions led. At O'Connell's special request he took charge of the Repeal Association while the State prisoners were at Richmond. Under his vigorous leadership registration was attended to, the conduct of members of Parliament was watched, representative positions were contested in the interests of Repeal, and Repeal reading-rooms were set up where public questions were discussed. Irish history was studied, and the prose and poetry of the *Nation* was read and admired.

To replace the old Repeal meeting-room on Burgh Quay a new and spacious room had recently been built, which O'Connell named Conciliation Hall; and when he attended the public meetings here for the first time after his release, the great hall was filled to overflowing. The anxiety to hear what he proposed for the future was great. Before Clontarf he spoke often of the invalidity of the Act of Union, and proposed to have a National Council of 300 elected, which the Queen's writ could and would change into an Irish Parliament. After Clontarf he talked of holding simultaneous meetings.[3] And now he said nothing of monster meetings nor simultaneous meetings, nor of the Council of 300, except as an advising

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[1] *Young Ireland*, pp. 188-92.

[2] *Ibid.* 94-96.

[3] *Ibid.* 139.

Council, nor had he anything to propose except that the Ministry should be impeached.[1]

All this was disappointing, but worse followed. Mr. Sharman Crawford and other Whig friends had just declared for Federation, which meant that the legislative Union must stand, but that a subordinate assembly should be set up in Dublin to deal with purely Irish affairs. This was a decided advance on mere Whiggery, and as such was welcomed by Davis. He still favoured Repeal; believed that if both movements were kept separate, the lesser demand might be conceded when the greater would be refused, or, failing this, at least important concessions might be won. This practical policy was hampered when O'Connell, to the surprise of all, suddenly gave in his adhesion to Federation and abandoned Repeal.[2] He effected nothing by the sudden change. Sharman Crawford did not want his support and would not co-operate with him, and Parliament would certainly reject Federation as well as Repeal if it were advocated by O'Connell.[3] Nor would the younger men among the Repealers have followed him if he abandoned Repeal. In these circumstances he retraced his steps, and the Repeal Association was once more a united body. O'Connell himself pushed forward the work of registration and the establishment of Repeal reading-rooms;[4] and the young men of the *Nation*—the Young Irelanders as they were now called—brought out the National Library, a series of books dealing with Ireland and its history.

Yet the national cause was retrograding rather than advancing. Old age had come upon O'Connell; his vigour and energy were less, he talked no longer of monster meetings and little of Repeal, he delegated much of his authority to his son John, and *he* and the Young Irelanders could not agree. Assuming the rôle of Defender of the Faith, the younger O'Connell thought that the writings of the Young Irelanders were not sufficiently orthodox. He forgot that these young

[1] *Young Ireland*, pp. 198-9.

[2] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. Appendix.

[3] *Young Ireland*, pp. 212-24.

[4] *Ibid.* 222.

men were not all Catholics, that some of them did not perhaps understand Catholic teaching, nor make allowance for Catholic susceptibilities, and that if they gave offence it was almost certain they did not intend it ; and he ought to have remembered that in a political association nothing is so fatal as the introduction of religious controversy. O'Connell sided with his son ; the Young Irelanders, especially Davis, felt hurt, and the breach which had been opened with the discussion of Federation was widened by religious differences, and still further by other events which soon followed.[1]

Anxious to break up the Repeal Association, and satisfied that this could be done better by kindness and generosity than by force, Peel, in the session of 1845, introduced three measures of redress. The first was a Land Bill—meagre, grudging and unsatisfactory, but yet too much for the House of Lords, which rejected it. A second Bill, which increased the grant to Maynooth College from £9000 to £26,000, became law, and with the hearty good wishes both of the Young Irelanders and O'Connell.[2] It was the third measure which led to fresh disputes and divisions. This was the Act under which the Queen's Colleges were established and endowed. Peel was anxious to placate the Catholics by providing for them higher education ; but English bigotry would not allow them a share in the endowments of Trinity College, nor, failing this, give them a Catholic University ; and Peel's plan was a mixed system of education such as had been set up by Stanley for the primary schools. Three colleges were to be established—one at Belfast, one at Cork and one at Galway—and these were to be constituent colleges of the Queen's University, which came into existence in 1850. In neither college was religious teaching to be endowed; students of all religions or of none were free to attend lectures ; there was to be no attack on any religion by professors, and no attempt at proselytism. The colleges were to be non-resident, but the religious authorities might make provision to superintend the boardinghouses of students of their communion, and might also provide, at their own expense, for religious instruction within the colleges.

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[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 338-40 ; *Young Ireland*, pp. 224-30.

[2] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 353.

The Young Irelanders, who were themselves of various religions and anxious to bring all Irishmen together, welcomed Peel's proposals as likely to soften religious antagonisms; but O'Connell took an opposite view, holding strongly that education not founded on religion was worthless and even pernicious. The Catholic bishops at their meeting agreed with O'Connell. Yet they would accept Peel's proposals if they were so amended that a fair proportion of the professors in the new colleges should be Catholics; that the bishops of each province should be visitors; that in such subjects as philosophy and history there should be separate Catholic chairs, and that a Catholic chaplain should be appointed to superintend the religious instruction of the Catholic students.[1] The Government would only concede part of these demands, and then the colleges were branded by the bishops as dangerous to the faith and morals of Catholic students. Dr. MacHale, adopting the words of an English M.P., described them as a gigantic scheme of godless education; and O'Connell, without even waiting for the Bishop's condemnation, attacked the *Nation* because it welcomed Peel's scheme, conditional, however, on its being amended. Before a crowded meeting in Conciliation Hall he turned fiercely on Davis. "There is no such party," he said, "as that styled Young Irelanders. It is time that this delusion should be put an end to. Young Ireland may play what pranks they please. I do not envy them the name they rejoice in. I shall stand by old Ireland, and I have some slight notion that old Ireland will stand by me." Davis, who felt unbounded admiration for O'Connell, was deeply hurt, and in replying burst into tears. The old chief, on his side, was profoundly touched; there were mutual explanations and expressions of affection and goodwill; and with the public reconciliation of Davis and O'Connell an end was put to this painful scene.[2]

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[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 357-60; *Young Ireland*, Appendix to chap. vii.

[2] *Young Ireland*, pp. 249-59, 263-4.

A few months later Davis died. His illness was short, his death unexpected, his loss felt by troops of friends as a great personal sorrow. Duffy, Dillon, Mitchel, MacNevin, even the colder Smith O'Brien, loved him as a brother. Though he died young he stands high among Ireland's great men. Poet, essayist, antiquarian, historian, orator, philosopher and statesman, it would be hard to find so gifted a man. He thought deeply and clearly, had broad human sympathies, and loved every Irishman if only that Irishman loved Ireland. English by descent, though not by birth, he disliked England because she misgoverned Ireland; but his was not that blatant patriotism which finds expression in loud talk, impotent sedition and impracticable schemes. He wished to lift up Ireland without humiliating England; but if the greater country continued to oppress the weaker, then he wished all Irishmen to unite in striking England down. No man was braver, none less reckless; with the instincts of a born leader, he controlled the stormy spirits who surrounded him—chided, persuaded, restrained, preached unity, toleration and forbearance. These Young Irelanders were a brilliant band with rare talents; but jealousy hid her head in the presence of Davis, and all looked to him as their chief. His kindness, his gentleness, his modesty and mildness, his winning ways bound their hearts to him as with bonds of steel, and when he died a place was vacant among them which by no possibility could be filled. O'Connell's grief was genuine and profound. His nature was generous, his heart was warm, and in spite of recent differences he loved Davis, and was stunned at the news of his death. In the few years left to him he did not expect to see the like of Davis again, and he solemnly declared that he "never knew any man who could be so useful to Ireland in the present stage of her struggles."[1]

The death of their greatest and wisest man leaving the Young Irelanders without a leader to moderate or restrain, they became disgusted with O'Connell's want of vigour and decision. The intolerance of John O'Connell increased their disgust, and when the Whigs came into office in 1846, and this event was followed by a new Whig alliance and the practical abandonment of Repeal, they shook the dust of Conciliation Hall off their feet. Their secession completed the ruin of an organization already tottering to its fall, and before another year had elapsed the great Repeal Association had reached the end of its career, and was little better than a memory of what had been.[1]

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[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 363; *Young Ireland*, pp. 274-6.

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[1] *Young Ireland*, pp. 277-82 ; *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 377-92 ; Mitchel's *History of Ireland*, ii. 213.

CHAPTER VIII

The Famine

IN ancient and mediæval times such famines as those which occurred in the nineteenth century were unknown in Ireland. Meat and fish, corn and vegetables, fruit and honey supplied the rich. The mass of the people lived chiefly on porridge, or stirabout (to give its modern name), a wholesome food made from oatmeal, and usually eaten with milk. The thriftless or afflicted were sometimes reduced to eating nettle-tops mixed with a little oatmeal, or perhaps water-cresses or shamrocks. These cases, however, were exceptional in a land where indigence was generously relieved and hospitality was extended to all.[1] The partial famines which arose during the Danish wars were caused by the Danes themselves, who plundered and spoiled and murdered, destroying the people as well as their food; and it was war also which caused the famine during the invasion of Edward Bruce.[2]

When Munster was desolated during the Desmond war (1580-83), and Ulster laid waste by Mountjoy in his campaigns against Tyrone, crops were intentionally destroyed, for in each case the invader invoked the aid of hunger to subdue his opponents. In a similar spirit the Cromwellian soldiers went forth with scythe and Bible, the former to cut down the ripening Papist corn lest the resistance of the Papist might be prolonged. And the famines which desolated Ireland periodically from 1725 to 1740, and with fearful consequences in the latter year, naturally resulted from the movement to consolidate farms, involving, as it did, the eviction of so many people from their homes.[1] In no case did the calamity arise from the sudden and unexpected failure of a crop on which the people mainly relied, and which had been sown in sufficient quantity for their needs.

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[1] Joyce, *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, ii. 141-58, 168-73.

[2] *Vide* vol. i.

So far, oatmeal continued for the masses to be the staple article of diet. But in the meantime Sir Walter Raleigh, in the end of the sixteenth century, had introduced the potato from Virginia. It did not, however, become at once popular; it was not sown extensively throughout the seventeenth century, and even in the first quarter of the eighteenth century corn continued to supply food to the nation.[2] Eviction and famine effected a change. The miserable patches of land on which so many of the people lived, if planted with corn, could not produce sufficient food for a family, and the scanty and ill-paid labour of the occupiers would not enable them to effectually supplement their food-supply. But if potatoes were sown instead of corn, hunger might be kept from the poor man's door. Except rice, the potato is the cheapest food for sustaining human life.[3] The ordinary produce of an Irish acre will feed a family of eight for a year, while at least two acres planted with corn would be required.[4] The latter, too, was subject to tithes, but the potato was not. Under these influences it grew in favour, until in Young's time potato-culture had so completely supplanted corn, that for nine months of the year potatoes and milk were everywhere the food of the poor. The multiplication of 40s. freeholds, following the Catholic Relief Act of 1793, added enormously to the number of very small tenants, and in consequence enormously increased the number of those dependent on the potato; and when in 1845 their one resource failed, millions were face to face with hunger.

In 1740, as previously, the potatoes, not being dug up until Christmas, were overtaken by a frost of excessive severity and destroyed; and this, added to insufficient tillage and want of employment, brought about the famine of that and the following year, during which a fifth of the whole population was swept away.[1] The famine of 1821 was caused by floods, which over large acres destroyed the growing crops.[2] That of the following year, complicated by disease, was even worse, and in the county of Cork alone no less than 122,000 persons were supported by charity.[3] In 1831 Dr. MacHale described the people of Killala as being without cattle, corn, potatoes or money; and such was the destitution that public works had to be set on foot.[4] Four years later seizures for rent and tithes left the people along the western coast again destitute,[5] and there were partial famines throughout the country in 1836, in 1837 and again in 1842.[6] In 1845 the landlords were still as grasping, the laws as unjust, the Government as unsympathetic, the skies as changeable as of old. But in that year, for the first time in Ireland, the potato was attacked by a mysterious disease which, independently of landlordism or law or capricious climate, was sufficient to precipitate a national calamity.

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[1] Joyce, *Social History of Ancient Ireland*, vol. ii.

[2] O'Rorke, *History of the Great Irish Famine*, pp. 8-10.

[3] Walpole's *History of England*, iv. 216.

[4] Young's *Tour*, ii. 45-46.

The blight, as it came to be called, first showed itself in Germany, then in Belgium, in 1842, after which it appeared in Canada in 1844, and in the next year in Great Britain and Ireland. In the latter country it was first seen about the middle of September in Wexford.[7] Thence it marched with invisible tread all over the land, poisoning the peasants' potato fields with the fatal breath of the simoon. The stalks, till then green and healthy and loaded with blossoms, crumpled and withered beneath its touch; the leaves looked as if acid had been sprinkled upon them; the burned spots grew larger until leaves and stalks were decayed; and the fields, lately vigorous with vegetable life, became a putrid mass of vegetable matter. When the potatoes were dug up

[1] O'Rorke, pp. 14-15, 24.
[2] *Ibid.* 30-31.
[3] Mitchel's *History*, ii. 154.
[4] *Letters*, pp. 191, 206.
[5] *Ibid.* 373.
[6] MacHale's *Letters*, p. 559; *Two Centuries of Irish History*, pp. 394-5.
[7] O'Rorke, pp. 48-51.

it was found that the fatal disease had penetrated beneath the soil and that a large part of the crop was rotten. Worse than all, when the sound potatoes, having been separated from the unsound ones, were deposited in the pits and the pits after a time opened, it was seen that the blight had entered, and laying its awful hand on the sound potatoes, had rendered them unfit for human food. The peasant, with blanched face, saw his food thus disappear, and as he looked at his children, shivering with fear at what they saw, and as he thought of the many months before him during which the potato was his and their only resource, he was filled with terror and dismay.

During the next few months much was written and spoken about the nature of the disease, the amount of damage done, the steps necessary to save the people from perishing. The *Times* sent over a special commissioner; the Government sent two scientific experts, Professors Lindley and Playfair; police and magistrates were instructed to report to Dublin Castle; newspaper correspondents traversed the country; clergymen wrote public letters; editors wrote leading articles; and a Committee of the Dublin Corporation was formed, one of its members being O'Connell.[1] The cause of the disease was variously though not satisfactorily explained. The extent of the damage varied according to the district. In some districts the potatoes were all but completely destroyed, in others but little affected; but taking the country as a whole, it was calculated that at least one-half of the crop was ruined, a loss which equalled £9,000,000. This was the estimate of Professors Lindley and Playfair, and they were not disposed to exaggerate. So great a calamity could only be effectually combated by the State itself. At a meeting of the Dublin Corporation O'Connell proposed that distilling should at once be stopped, that the export of all provisions should be prohibited, that public granaries should be set up, that railways should be built, and that other reproductive works should be commenced; and that for these purposes £1,500,000 should

[1] O'Rorke, pp. 52-55, 59-74.

be advanced by the State on loan. These proposals having been adopted, a deputation waited on the Viceroy, Lord Heytesbury. He received them coldly, told them that inquiries were being made, that so far there was no great cause for alarm, that the Government were watchful, and that as to the proposals made, they could not be carried out without legislative sanction. Privately, however, he warned Peel that the situation was grave, and that there was danger in delay.[1]

The next step was with Peel. Nor could it be denied that his responsibilities were grave. He had crushed the Repeal Association, and in maintaining the Union, protested that the British Parliament was both able and willing to redress every Irish wrong. And yet, though occupying a commanding position among public men, he had done nothing to make his words good. He had resisted every reform of a hated and alien Church; he had not curbed the excessive powers of the landlords, nor improved the condition of their tenants. He had done nothing to check the division and subdivision of small holdings. He had been told by Drummond that the population of Ireland was rapidly increasing without any corresponding increase in the means of subsistence; that an urgent need was to change tens of thousands of the smaller tenants into labourers, and furnish them with employment in the building of railways and the reclamation of waste lands;[2] and that if this were not done a famine would surely come. But he had not heeded Drummond's warnings; he had defeated Drummond's plans; he had left the people without employment, the railways unbuilt and the waste lands unreclaimed. And now Drummond's prophecy was being fulfilled—the famine had come, and more than 8,000,000[3] of Irishmen were crying vainly for food.[4]

Nor did the Premier show any anxiety to hearken to the appeal. In spite of the Viceroy's letters and the scientific experts' reports, he refused to summon Parliament, and did not call the Cabinet together till November. Even then he would not stop distilling, nor the export of Irish corn, nor set up public works; and he petulantly declared that the Irish had alienated the sympathy of England by their monster meetings and their support of O'Connell. What he proposed was to reduce by Order in Council the duty on imported corn, to call Parliament together at once, and then to partially repeal the Corn Laws.[1] But to this the Cabinet would not agree, and Peel, unable to carry his point, resigned office in December. Lord John Russell then essayed to form a Government, but failed, and Peel returned to office, having parted with his ablest colleague, Lord Stanley, who, however, was succeeded at the Colonial Office by Mr. Gladstone, a still abler man.

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[1] O'Rorke, pp. 55-58.
[2] Walpole, iv. 244-6.
[3] Exact population in 1846, 8,175,124 (*Annual Register*, p. 130).
[4] Drummond's *Life*, pp. 289-311.

Peel's great difficulty was the Corn Laws. In the Tory party the landlord interest had always been strong, and the Tory squire favoured Protection, because it kept up the price of corn and enabled the farmer to pay his rent. This he selfishly considered of much more importance than to cheapen the poor man's food. Peel had favoured these views, nor was even the Liberal party as yet prepared to adopt Free Trade. But the people in the towns clamoured for cheaper food-stuffs. Manchester spoke out emphatically, and an Anti-Corn Law League was formed there. Its President was Mr. Cobden, M.P., a man of the highest character, of the purest motives, of great intellectual capacity, wielding considerable influence in Parliament, but much more beyond its walls. Under the influence of the Free Traders' propaganda, Peel's Protectionist convictions were already shaken, and in 1842 he adopted a sliding scale, making the import duty less the higher the price of corn at home. His entire abandonment of Protection was hastened by the Irish famine, and by the fact that Lord John Russell declared absolutely for Free Trade in the end of 1845, and when Parliament opened in January Peel prepared and soon carried the total repeal of the Corn Laws.[2]

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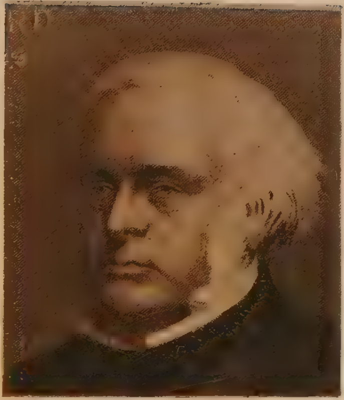
[1] Peel's *Memoirs*, ii. 158.

[2] *Annual Register*, pp. 30-36, 98; Walpole's *England*, iv. 60-68, 118-22, 143-4, 174-6, 260-71.

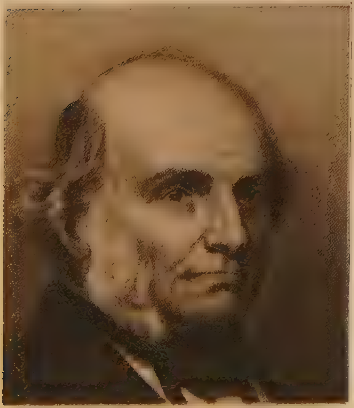
LORD BEACONSFIELD
(Benjamin Disraeli)



JOHN BRIGHT

SIR ROBERT PEEL

THOMAS DRUMMOND



LORD JOHN RUSSELL

LORD STANLEY

The only other measure foreshadowed in the Queen's speech was an Irish Coercion Bill. During the winter some outrages had been committed, and because of these there was to be coercion. The English poor man's cry was hearkened to by the cheapening of his bread; the Irish poor man, whose stomach cried out for food, was to have instead the lash applied to his back. On the Corn Bill the Tory party divided. A large section, submissive to party discipline, followed Peel, but more than a hundred fought his Bill at every stage. Their nominal leader was Lord George Bentinck, a man of respectable but not brilliant capacity; their real leader was Benjamin Disraeli. Of Jewish extraction, and not owning a perch of land or feeling any sympathy with the country squire, he might best be described as a political adventurer. His convictions on any subject were not deep, his ambition was boundless, his power of invective unsurpassed; and in Parliamentary warfare no man could lead a party better to the attack. Distrusted by Peel, who refused to give him office, he revenged himself by leading the Protectionists; and in the Corn Law debates he attacked the Premier with a violence, a venom, and even a ferocity such as had rarely been seen within the walls of Parliament. He fought, however, in vain. The Whigs and Irish supported Peel, and the cause for which Cobden had laboured so long triumphed in the repeal of the Corn Laws. On the Coercion Bill Disraeli's turn came. Under his leadership the Protectionists joined the Whigs and Irish in opposition. Peel was defeated and at once resigned, and in July Lord John Russell and the Liberals came into office.[1]

By that time the threatened famine in Ireland had become an awful reality. In Clare many people were starving, near Limerick not even a rotten potato was left, in Kilkenny three-fourths of the inhabitants had not three days' provisions; and all this as early as April. In May there was not a potato within twenty miles of Clonmel; provisions had reached famine prices; and in Galway potatoes were selling at sixpence a stone, and even half of those sold were unfit for food. By the month of June 51,000 were in the workhouses, and before that date there had been deaths from starvation in Limerick and in Newry.[1]

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[1] O'Rorke, pp. 116-17; Walpole, pp. 273-86; Peel's *Memoirs; Annual Register*, pp. 142-60.

Far worse than this followed. During the spring the poor people had made heroic efforts to obtain seed potatoes. They pinched and saved and stinted themselves, they sold their corn and stock, and even their bedclothes; and often the dress, which on Sunday had excited the admiration of her friends and the envy of her female rivals, was deposited at the pawnshop by the rustic beauty, with quivering lips and tearful eyes. The seed obtained with such difficulty and with such sacrifice was duly sown, and up to the end of July all promised well. But again the blight fell, and the potato crop all over the land became its victim. Not half the crop, as in 1845, but the whole crop was thus suddenly blotted out of existence. Gazing at his rotting potato fields, the afflicted peasant bowed his head in anguish and looked to the future without hope. It would be a low estimate to put the loss at £20,000,000, and it has been put at twice that amount[2]—a calamity to which even the chequered history of Ireland was unable to furnish a parallel.

In the early part of the year Peel carried through Parliament several measures to meet the distress. Under these Acts the Grand Juries at Assizes got more ample powers to hold extraordinary presentment Sessions for country works; the Board of Works also got more power; there was an Act to facilitate the employment of the labouring poor in the distressed districts; and Indian meal was imported and sold at reasonable rates.[3] Under these Acts £733,000 were expended by the 15th of August; there was also a relief fund, and altogether a sum of £852,000 was spent. So far there had been a good deal of suffering, though the deaths were few. But Lord John Russell had to combat a much greater calamity, and must therefore go much further than Peel. At once he appointed Mr. Shiel and several Catholics to office; made Lord Bessborough, an old

[1] O'Rorke, pp. 118-21. [2] *Ibid.* 153-6. [3] *Ibid.* 160-61.

friend of O'Connell's, Viceroy, with Mr. Labouchere as Chief Secretary; and O'Connell readily supported the new Government, believing it would grapple successfully with the famine.[1] This confidence was not quite justified. The Board of Works had been found inefficient.[2] Public works supported by public funds ought surely to be works of public utility: if Government food depots were to be established they ought to be within easy reach of the people, and the food ought to be cheap; and it was unfair to burden the rates with the weight of a national calamity. Yet this is what the Premier did. By his Labour Rate Act the Viceroy was empowered to call together extraordinary presentment Sessions, which might present public works, and these, when passed by the Treasury, were carried out by the Board of Works. Repayment was to be made by half-yearly instalments levied on the poor-rate.[3] Relief Committees might be formed, but only to prepare lists of those to be employed. Government relief depôts, stocked with Indian meal, were set up along the western coast, but were not to supersede or undersell the local shopkeeper;[4] and the works undertaken were not to be reproductive, but only for the sake of employment.

In a short time indeed the Chief Secretary and Lord-Lieutenant took upon themselves to allow reproductive works,[5] but beyond this they did not go. The rates became so burdened that in Cork County alone presentments passed amounting to £228,000; in Mayo, out of 56,200 families 46,000 were on the public works. Before the end of the year £1,000,000 had been advanced by the Treasury; 350,000 men were employed and 150,000 others pleaded for work in vain,[6] and, being hungry, were clamouring for food.

To superintend these public works a horde of 7000 officials were spread over the country. Some, being insolent, refused work to the destitute; others, being corrupt, delayed to pay for it when done; and many minimized the famine in the midst of famishing crowds.[1] The rule of the Government depots not to interfere with the shopkeepers was unfortunate, for heartless corn merchants were found to traffic on the people's miseries, and buying the corn cheap they sold it dear.[2] Women and children, half-naked and perishing with cold, swarmed over the turnip fields, devouring the turnips raw, while the little children looked on screaming with hunger.[3] Starving and menacing crowds paraded the streets demanding work and food,[4] deaths from starvation began and continued, the clergy and dispensary doctors were worn out attending the sick and dying, coroners' inquests became frequent with "died from starvation" as their verdicts; and Mitchel calculates that in 1846 "not less than 300,000 [5] perished either of mere hunger or of typhus fever caused by hunger." [6]

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[1] *Correspondence*, ii. 376-84.

[2] O'Rorke, pp. 158-9.

[3] *Ibid.* 167-9.

[4] *Ibid.* 161, 227.

[5] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 385-7.

[6] O'Rorke, pp. 203-20.

To still further dishearten the afflicted people the popular leaders were at war. At the death of Davis the nominal leader of the Young Irelanders was Smith O'Brien, but the real leader had since become John Mitchel. He was a solicitor, and an Ulster Presbyterian, and like Wolfe Tone seems to have always hated England. He had considerable literary capacity, took Carlyle as his model and imitated him with success, and was as bold, as blunt, and as outspoken as his master. He had little sympathy with O'Connell's peaceful agitation, still less with his ultra-Catholic views, and none at all with his constant preaching of the doctrine that in no case should there be spilling of blood; and he regarded the renewed alliance of O'Connell and Lord John Russell with undisguised hatred and contempt. Absolutely fearless, he would have held the meeting at Clontarf in defiance of Government, would have broken down the bridges behind the troops as they left the city, and captured the city itself; and when the people were dying of famine in 1846, he would have seized the people's corn, which, to pay the landlord's rent, was borne from the Irish shores on every outward-flowing tide. By O'Connell these views were abhorred. He wished to remain on good terms with Lord John Russell, wished the Repeal Association to be in everything loyal and peaceable, and in July 1846 he proposed a series of resolutions pledging the members against physical force not only in the present but for the future, no matter what contingency might arise. He was answered in a speech of extraordinary eloquence by a young recruit to the Young Ireland party, Thomas Francis Meagher, and as neither side would give way, and there was no one like Davis strong enough to make peace, the Young Irelanders, headed by Smith O'Brien, left Conciliation Hall and set up the Irish Confederation. Henceforth, says Mitchel, the Repeal Association was of no use except to obtain offices for the friends of O'Connell.[1]

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[1] O'Rorke, pp. 201, 214-15.

[2] *Ibid.* 225-6.

[3] *Ibid.* 207.

[4] *Ibid.* 228-37.

[5] The Government returns were 2041 *registered deaths.*

[6] *Last Conquest*, pp. 117-18

The year 1846 thus closed in darkness and gloom, but in the new year the gloom deepened and the horrors were greater still. In January Parliament met, and in the same month some of the Irish landlords, having formed themselves into a Reproductive Works Committee, held a public meeting in Dublin and had a series of resolutions passed. They asked to have the Navigation and Corn Laws suspended; condemned the Labour Rate Act and its wasteful expenditure in useless works; demanded State loans to the landlords for reclamation; demanded that railways should be built, and such reproductive works set on foot as drainage, building of piers and harbours, and, further, that emigration should be encouraged by the State.[2]

While not willing to give legislative sanction to all these resolutions, the Government recognized that the Labour Rate Act should be superseded. Two measures were therefore introduced and passed, one commonly called the Soup Kitchen Act, which established a Relief Committee in each district, empowered to levy rates, receive subscriptions, and also receive donations from Government. To those able to work on the farmers' lands, or even on their own, they were to give wages; to those unable to work they were to give food, and for this purpose soup kitchens were set up. To cheapen food the Corn and Navigation Laws were suspended till November.[1] By another Act outdoor relief was to be given to the destitute whom the workhouses could not contain; but an Irish member, Mr. Gregory, had a clause added disentitling to outdoor relief those in possession of more than a rood of land. Mr. Gregory had also another clause added providing assistance out of the rates for emigration.[2] A sum of £50,000 was advanced as a loan to landlords to obtain potato seed, and £620,000 to Irish railways. The Premier also promised measures for reclamation and drainage, but the opposition was so strong that he was unable to proceed. Many of the English members blamed the Irish landlords, and were unwilling to relieve Irish distress with Imperial funds. Peel, whose influence in debate was enormous, voiced these views, telling the Premier that he had better turn to other work than draining Irish bogs.[3] Peel also helped to defeat a measure of Lord George Bentinck whereby £16,000,000 were to be advanced by the State for the construction of Irish railways.[4]

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[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 377-98; *Last Conquest*, pp. 114-15.

[2] O'Rorke, pp. 280-92.

The Soup Kitchen Act did not become law until the end of May; but the Government, well aware that it would pass and that time pressed, formed Relief Committees in the end of February. There were then more than 700,000 men employed on the public works, the expenditure for the month of February being all but a million pounds. Gradually these works were to be discontinued. On the 20th of March one-fifth of the men were paid off, and by the end of April all works started under the Labour Rate Act had ceased. This was dismissing the men too rapidly, for the Relief Committees in many districts were not yet in working order, and to stop work and wages without having anything to give as a substitute necessarily produced much misery.[5] But when the new measures were really working, they worked well and fought the famine with much greater success than the Labour Rate Act. To obtain nourishing food at a small cost M. Soyer, the *chef* of the London Reform Club, came to Ireland and set up a model soup kitchen. But his system was not a success. The people preferred nourishing soup to what was weak and watery, no matter how great the art expended on its manufacture, and M. Soyer soon returned to London.[1] The Irish cooks, with less pretence and probably with less art, did better, and in Cork city as many as 48,000 quarts of soup were served out every week. The efforts of the State were largely supplemented by the exertions of private Committees and Associations. The Irish Central Relief Committee collected and expended £70,000, the Society of Friends nearly £200,000, the British Association £600,000, and there were besides an Indian Relief Fund, Evangelical, Baptist, and Wesleyan Committees, and several Ladies' Clothing Societies.[2] Subscriptions came from all parts of the world and from all classes of men—from the cities of England, from France and Italy and Austria and Switzerland, from the West Indian Islands, from Canada, from distant Madras and Calcutta, from Australia (more distant still). The Sultan of Turkey sent a large donation;[3] individual Englishmen gave as much as £1000; and English railroads and shipping companies carried parcels of clothes free.

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[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 21-23. [2] *Ibid.* 47. [3] *Ibid.* 33-34.

[4] *Ibid.* 54-56; O'Rorke, pp. 335-63.

[5] *Transactions of Friends' Relief Committee* (*Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1990).

But the supplies sent from America were on a scale unparalleled in history. Not a city from Boston to New Orleans but held its meeting and formed its Relief Committee. The generous heart of a great nation was profoundly stirred. Rich merchants gave princely subscriptions, professional men were not behindhand, all the churches aided, and poor men readily laid down their dollars. From Philadelphia alone eight vessels were sent with provisions; the States of Alabama and Mississippi sent large consignments of Indian corn; railroads carried free of charge all packages marked Ireland; free storage for such was offered to any extent; public carriers would accept nothing for conveying what was destined for Irish relief; even war-vessels had their guns removed and were used to transport food to the starving nation across the sea.[1]

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[1] O'Rorke, pp. 427-31.

[2] *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1990.

[3] O'Rorke, p. 373.

By these donations, generously given and gratefully received, many lives were saved. But the famine still marched in triumph over the land, and every day fresh victims were offered up to satisfy its insatiable demands. People died in the cities and in the towns, even in Dublin and Belfast and Cork and Limerick, as well as in the country districts; they died in the fields; they died at the public works and on the way to the Government depots for food; they died at the workhouse door vainly seeking for admission; they died in the workhouses themselves, where fever and dysentery, following on famine, did what famine was unable to do. In Cork Workhouse 44 died in a single day; in the South Dublin Union 700 were down with dysentery; in Westport Union, of 33 anointed in one day by the priest, only three were living on the following day. Weakened with hunger or sick with fever or dysentery, they lay down in their cabins, without a bed to lie on, without food or fire, often without clothes. In one house 17 persons were found lying together in fever; a young man was found lying in fever by the side of his brother, dead for three days, and of his sister, dead for five days; a mother putting her five children to bed at night found some of them dead with hunger in the morning; and often, when all but one of a family had died, the survivor barred up the doors and windows of his little cabin to keep out the dogs and pigs, and then lay down, dying amidst the dead. Car-drivers passing along saw corpses on the road and often drove over corpses at night; a father and son dying of hunger, the survivors of the family, unable to buy a candle, kept up a light during the night by pulling the thatch off the house and setting it on fire. Funerals ceased to be attended. The afflicted father brought the dead bodies of his children to the graveyard alone; corpses were often tied up in straw and thus buried, or were not buried at all and were eaten by rats and dogs; coffins became a luxury, and in Skibbereen and elsewhere hinged coffins were used, one body after another being brought to the grave in the same coffin.[1] Coroners were unequal to the task of holding so many inquests, and often when inquests were held, the jury, enraged at what they saw, brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Lord John Russell.[2]

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[1] *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1990.

In the midst of such horrors the living began to envy the dead, for *they* had ceased to suffer while the living had their sufferings still to go through. Many lived on cabbage and a little meal, others on cabbage and seaweed; in Mayo men lived on turnips, and some on ass and horse flesh, even when diseased;[3] others on grass and turf, and in one case a woman ate her dead child.[4] Men worked on the roads without shoes, women were almost naked, children with nothing to cover them but an old shirt and ragged waistcoat; and this while the blasts of winter blew. On his journey to Donegal Mr. Foster noted that pigs and poultry had disappeared; the dogs had been killed; the people had a sickly livid colour; the children had ceased to play, and reduced to skeletons by hunger, they had lost the freshness of youth, and were like weazened old men. Some of the resident landlords were doing their best to relieve suffering, but the absentees, with a callousness which it would be hard to equal and impossible to surpass, remained unmoved, and to the relief funds not one penny did they subscribe.[5] The law allowed them—and shame for Parliament that it did—to seize for rent; and in the midst of hunger and horror, bailiffs and agents supported by police laid hands on everything. They seized the people's sheep and cattle and oats, or their scanty furniture, or the potatoes grown from seed given in charity. They turned the people out-of-doors, levelled their cabins or set them on fire, and sent their starving tenants adrift without money or clothes, with the result that in the

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[1] O'Connor's *The Parnell Movement*, p. 38.

[2] O'Rorke, pp. 366-419.

[3] *Ibid.* 390.

[4] O'Connor, p. 31.

[5] *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1991.

Barony of Erris in Mayo 6000 died of famine in a single year. "I have visited," said Mr. Tuke, "the wasted remains of the once noble Red Man on his reservation grounds in North America, and explored the 'Negro Quarter' of the degraded and enslaved African, but never have I seen misery so intense, or physical degradation so complete as among the dwellers in the bog holes of Erris."[1]

While famine and fever thus held sway, and the evictor levelled and burned the humble houses of the poor, to the nation bowed down by so many afflictions there came across the ocean the sad news that O'Connell was dead. Under the constant strain of his public labour his splendid constitution had become impaired, and probably as early as 1844 he was attacked by softening of the brain. The failure of the Repeal movement, his imprisonment, the dissensions between Young and Old Irelanders, which he vainly strove to end[2]—all these helped to develop the fatal disease which soon held him in its grasp. But it was the famine above all which struck him the most crushing blow. To see those whom he loved so well and for whom he had laboured so long perishing by thousands, and to feel unable to save them, was more than he could bear.[3] Out of their poverty these poor people had helped to swell his yearly tribute; they had been his audiences at the monster meetings; they laughed or wept with him, responsive to his every mood; they cheered themselves hoarse at the very mention of his name; he was their idol, their uncrowned king, the leader whom they would have followed to the ends of the earth. And now he could not save them. Their potato fields were a mass of putrefaction; the air they breathed was laden with pestilence; their cabins were in ruins, or if still standing were the abodes of hunger and disease; and day after day thousands of men and women were going down to their coffinless graves.

Feeble and failing as he was, O'Connell laboured to stem the ever-rising tide. He made speeches, he wrote letters, he

[1] *A Visit to Connaught in 1847.*

[2] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 393-8.

[3] *Ibid.* 392, 402-3.

propounded plans, he moved resolutions, he hurled Peel from power when Peel's specific for Irish discontent was fetters rather than food;[1] and his last speech in Parliament was a plaintive appeal for the starving people. "Ireland is in your hands," he said; "she is in your power. If you don't save her, she can't save herself; and I solemnly call upon you to recollect that I predict, with the sincerest conviction, that one-fourth of her population will perish unless you come to her relief."[2]

This is the speech which Disraeli describes as having been delivered in April 1846 by "a feeble old man muttering at a table."[3] But the true date was February 1847, and by that time indeed O'Connell was bent and bowed, his once powerful frame shrivelled and shrunk, and with difficulty members heard that voice which had so often thrilled the House of Commons. But he was listened to with much respect, and cheers greeted him from all quarters of the House. A few days later he got seriously ill. The doctors recommended a warmer climate. O'Connell himself, expecting that death was near, wished to die at Rome, and early in March set out for the Eternal City.

In London and on his journey the greatest kindness and sympathy were shown him. Newspapers and public men who had so often reviled him spoke of him with respect; the Queen sent to inquire for his health; Lord Shrewsbury, whom he had assailed some years before, repeatedly called at his hotel; Lord Decies, one of the Waterford Beresfords, sent him shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day; and when he was leaving Folkestone for France crowds assembled to wish him Godspeed. At Paris he was visited by Montalembert and other prominent Catholics, who hailed him as the greatest of Catholic leaders;[4] at Lyons the sympathy for him was universal and sincere; at Genoa the whole city prayed for his recovery. But it was not to be, and on the 15th of May, as the sinking sun was gilding with purple glory both land and sea, he breathed his last in that superb city which in its pride and beauty looks down upon the blue waters of the Mediterranean. His wish was that his heart should be brought to Rome and his body to Ireland, and this was done. Nor could anything exceed the respect paid to his remains on the long journey home. At Liverpool, as the vessel carrying the body passed down the Mersey, the ships of all nations in the river lowered their flags. In mid-Channel an Irish vessel was met outward bound. It contained Irish emigrants, and when it was known that O'Connell's remains were on board the homeward-bound vessel, the Irish threw themselves on the deck, uttering heart-rending cries. Through the streets of Dublin 50,000 followed the remains to the grave, and twice that number were spectators along the route.[1] The greatest of the land in Church and State were present or represented, and the whole Catholic people mourned him as their champion and their chief, whose place no living Irishman could fill.[2]

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[1] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 375, 385-6.

[2] *Ibid.* 403.

[3] *Life of Bentinck.*

[4] Nemours Godre, *Daniel O'Connell, sa vie, son œuvre*, pp. 368-70.

Many at that time and since have adversely criticized the policy and sought to minimize the services of O'Connell. They blame him for his sharp censures of the men of '98, for his constant denunciation of rebellion, for his abandonment of the Clontarf meeting, for his alliances with the Whigs, for the poor legislative results which followed so many years of agitation and sacrifice. But they lose sight of his difficulties. The French Revolution and the '98 Rebellion gave him a horror of seeking reform through violence, and he knew that it was the Rebellion of '98 which had made the Union possible. Few will agree with him that it is never lawful to rebel; for tyranny sometimes becomes unbearable, and the history of the world shows that it is only by the sword some of the greatest victories of human liberty have been won. After all, to hold the Clontarf meeting would probably have ended in massacre, and O'Connell's error was not in abandoning it,

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[1] *Annual Register*, p. 99.

[2] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 404-18; Mitchel's *Last Conquest*, pp. 135-7.

DANIEL O'CONNELL

but in thinking that a mere display of force would have succeeded in 1843 as it had in 1829. The legislative fruits of the Whig alliance were indeed small. Yet it was something to end the tithe war, to reform the corporations, to emancipate the Catholics. Nor must Drummond's administration be forgotten, when the tithe-proctor was curbed, the landlord reminded of his duties, and law impartially administered. But much more than all this was the change affected in the people themselves. When O'Connell commenced his public life he found them beaten and cowed, without courage, without spirit, almost without hope. He lifted them up, gave them courage and hope and confidence, taught them to feel their strength and bid defiance to their landlords, who had hitherto led them to the polling-booths like sheep. He fought their enemies at the Bar, restrained the violence of their tyrants on the Bench, chastised their traducers in the Senate, made their cause known to the world, and was one of the few men in the British Isles large enough to be seen throughout Europe. He had his faults, as all men have, and perhaps his countrymen liked him all the better for this, for his faults and failings were their own. In his own day no man could compete with him for popular favour, and the verdict of his own day has become the verdict of history. Ireland was grateful, and has not failed to give visible proof of her gratitude. The finest street in her metropolis bears his name; facing O'Connell Bridge, his colossal statue, the product of Irish genius, looks down on the crowds as they pass and repass; and as the traveller from the country approaches Dublin his attention is arrested by a graceful round tower which stands sentinel over O'Connell's grave. A grateful nation thus honourably discharges its debt in paying fitting homage to the memory of the greatest of her sons.

It was in August that O'Connell was laid to rest, and by that time the country could rejoice amid its many sorrows that the harvest—both potatoes and corn—was abundant. But for many this availed little. Thousands being debarred from relief if they held more than a rood of land, voluntarily surrendered their farms. Many thousands more were ruthlessly evicted by their landlords. Such was the effect of these co-operating causes, that within one year 70,000 occupiers with their families were rooted out of the land. What the landlords wished was to consolidate farms, and while the number of holdings under thirty acres were thus diminished, those over thirty acres were increased.[1] These lawless and homeless men, seeking admission to the workhouses, found them full; wandering aimlessly about, they were imprisoned under the Vagrancy Act;[2] stricken with fever, they found the fever hospitals choked with patients to such an extent that in '47 alone 156,000 patients were admitted to the fever hospitals.[3] Thousands of others died in their houses or on the roads, and not only of fever but also of dysentery, dropsy and small-pox; and Mitchel's estimate is that in 1847 half a million died of famine and disease.[4]

To foreign countries and the Colonies there had been from 1831 to 1841 a continuous stream of emigration, a yearly average of 43,000; the numbers increased in the years that followed, until, in 1846, 106,000 left Ireland for foreign countries, besides 278,000 landed at Liverpool.[5] But in 1847 all previous records were beaten. The crowds whom eviction and the Poor Law had made homeless, being unable to pay the passage across the Atlantic, crossed to England. All were poor, some unable to work, many already in fever; and while the English workmen disliked to have the English labour market thus flooded by Irish exiles, the English ratepayers disliked having so many thrown on the rates and so many in hospitals and elsewhere to spread disease. The Government took alarm, and an Order in Council was issued imposing stringent quarantine regulations; shipping companies were also induced to raise the rates for deck passages; and these measures all but closed Great Britain to Irish emigrants.[1] Scraping together the little money they could gather, or helped by the landlords, who were delighted to get rid of them, thousands then turned their faces to the setting sun, and every vessel which left Ireland for Canada and the United States was filled with Irish, fleeing from famine and disease. Once embarked, fresh horrors were in store for them. The vessels were crowded, the ventilation defective, the food scant and unhealthy, the water impure, medical attendance wanting; and soon, generated by unsanitary conditions or perhaps carried on board by some passenger, fever broke out, and the ships became so many charnel-houses. Of 493 who sailed on the *Erin Queen* 136 died on the voyage; on the *Avon*, 246 out of 552; on the *Virginia*, 267 out of 476; and on another vessel not named, out of 600 only 100 survived.[2] And when the survivors landed on American soil they landed only to die. Along the banks of the St. Lawrence were to be found "one unbroken chain of graves, where repose father and mother, sisters and brothers, in a commingled heap, no stone marking the spot."[3] Farther south, dishonest lodging-house keepers and railroad and shipping agents, equally dishonest, preyed upon the freshly arrived—Germans on Germans, Irish on Irish—and a Commission appointed by the State of New York reported that they had no conception that these frauds were so great.[4]

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[1] *Last Conquest*, pp. 126-211.
[2] *Ibid.* 127-8.
[3] O'Rorke, p. 481.
[4] *Last Conquest*, p. 143.
[5] O'Rorke, pp. 486-7.

Meanwhile, repelled from the workhouses, debarred from crossing to England, unable to reach America, made vagrants by evictions and punished as such by Act of Parliament, the homeless at home grew desperate, and through the autumn and winter outrages were common. Landlords, agents, bailiffs, magistrates and police fell victims to popular wrath, and rarely were the assailants brought to justice.[5] Parliament was summoned in November, but instead of the evictor's hand being stayed the old specific for Irish disaffection was again tried, and a Coercion Bill was soon passed into law.[1] But disaffection continued and increased. Mitchel openly advocated violence, resolved to cross the path of the British car of conquest even though it should crush him to atoms.[2] Unable to carry with him the Irish Confederation, he seceded from it; unable to persuade the *Nation*, he established the *United Irishman*, and in its columns urged that the corn leaving the country to pay rents should be forcibly detained to feed the hungry. Under the influence of his teaching Sarsfield Clubs were formed, arms were purchased, pikes manufactured, men were enrolled and drilled and studied the tactics of guerilla warfare. Before the new year had advanced far his hands were strengthened by the events which occurred in England and on the Continent. The English Chartists demanding manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, annual Parliaments, payment of members and other things,[3] and finding that Parliament persistently refused their demands, now menaced Parliament with force. In France Louis Philippe was dethroned; the Austrians were driven from Italy; there were uprisings in Rome and Vienna and Berlin; and the sounds that came to Ireland across the seas were the exultant shouts of the masses, the lamentations of reactionary and discarded ministers and the crash of falling thrones.[4] Mitchel's adherents soon increased, the Confederation adopted his views, and Smith O'Brien, Meagher, Dillon and the other leaders became as anxious as he was to try the fortune of war.

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[1] *Last Conquest*, p. 128.

[2] O'Rorke, p. 499.

[3] *Four Years of Irish History*, p. 532.

[4] *Halliday Pamphlets*, p. 1990; O'Rorke, pp. 498-502.

[5] Walpole's *England*, iv. 325-8.

The Government anticipated them, and a Treason Felony Act was passed, making the speaking, writing or printing anything revolutionary punishable by transportation; and under this new Act, Mitchel, by means of a duly packed jury, was convicted and sent for fourteen years to Van Diemen's Land.[1] The *United Irishman* was suppressed and so were its two successors, the *Irish Tribune* and the *Irish Felon*, and in July the Habeas Corpus Act was suspended.[2] Had it not been, there would probably have been no attempt at insurrection. Mitchel was the only man of action among the leaders. The others were for the most part poets and essayists, and such men dream of revolutions but do not make them. But when the Habeas Corpus Act had been suspended, O'Brien and his friends, knowing that they would be at once cast into prison, left Dublin to rouse the masses in Tipperary. The priests, however, had been before them, and pointing out the futility of undisciplined masses waging war against a great empire, induced many to abandon the idea of a rebellion. Many others were disgusted with Smith O'Brien. He was honourable, upright, chivalrous and brave, but he was also weak and irresolute, and utterly incompetent to be a successful leader, either in peace or war.[3] An abortive attack on a police barrack at Ballingarry was his only exploit. The crowds then melted away from him, and he and Meagher and M'Manus were arrested, convicted and sentenced to death, the sentence in each case being commuted to transportation beyond the seas. Duffy was prosecuted but acquitted, Dillon escaped to America; others were thrown into prison, under the Habeas Corpus Act, or were pardoned; the Government had triumphed, and the miserable insurrection of 1848 was at an end.[4]

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[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 225-43. Peel supported the Government, and was disgusted that a much more drastic measure had not been introduced (*Greville's Memoirs*, vi. 109-10).

[2] *Last Conquest*, p. 143.

[3] Walpole, iv. 47.

[4] *Greville's Memoirs*, vi. 159.

When Parliament met in 1849 seventy-one Irish Unions were bankrupt;[5] and now, says Mitchel, as the Poor Law hitherto had failed, Ireland was to have more Poor Law.[6] At all events Lord John Russell had an Act passed called the Rate-in-Aid Act, under which, when the rate in any electoral division reached 5s., it was to be supplemented by a Union rate, and when the rate over the whole Union reached 7s., it was to be supplemented by a rate of sixpence in the pound over the whole country.[1] Angry with Ireland because of the attempted insurrection of '48, the British Parliament was not disposed to be generous, and the Irish members it could afford to despise. At the General Election of 1847 the Repealers had beaten the Young Irelanders, whom they denounced as atheists and murderers of O'Connell, and they had refused to pledge themselves against accepting office. John O'Connell himself was a place-hunter, and so were the Repealers who followed him; and in 1849 the sufferings of Ireland were greater than in any previous year except 1847. Within twelve months the landlords dispossessed half a million of persons, and with such heartlessness and cruelty that even the unimpassioned Peel denounced them.[2] The partial failure of the harvest of '48 sent many to their graves; fever and dysentery added their victims; and in 1849 cholera first appeared, killing 36,000,—the total deaths from famine and disease in that year reaching 240,000.[3] During all this time the tide of emigration continued to flow. In 1847, 215,000 emigrated; almost the same number in 1849; and in 1851, when the famine was over, 257,000 left Ireland.[4] In the latter year the population was brought down to 6,500,000,[5] and O'Connell's prediction that a fourth of the people would be lost was fulfilled.

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[1] *Last Conquest*, pp. 168-9, 185; O'Connor, p. 48.

[2] *Ibid.* 196.

[3] *O'Connell's Correspondence*, ii. 183-4.

[4] *Last Conquest*, pp. 193-207.

[5] *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 413.

[6] *Last Conquest*, p. 211.

Not less disastrous than this terrible depletion was the change effected in the character of the people. Cases there were where the noblest charity and self-sacrifice were shown. Priests, who attended the sick during the day, often gave their evening meal to some of the famishing poor and went themselves supperless to bed; a Protestant clergyman was known to have taken off his shirt and put it on a naked fever patient; doctors shirked no duty, and often paid the penalty of their devotion with their lives; even some landlords lived on Indian meal, the more generously to relieve the poor; parents dying with hunger gave the untasted food to their children, and died that their children might live; and many shared their last meal with the beggar who came to their doors. But there is the dark side to the picture also. The unburied corpses, the unattended funerals, the pitiful pleadings of the hungry, the torture of the fever-stricken ceased to arouse pity. Overpowering calamity had dried up the fountains of compassion, and hearts no longer felt which had once been generous and kind. The self-respect engendered by Father Mathew's temperance teaching, the self-reliance engendered by the Repeal agitation had equally disappeared. Outside of hell Mr. Gavan Duffy thought there were no sights to equal those he had seen in a Munster workhouse. Fed like dogs, housed like cattle, the inmates were huddled together, naked and unashamed, screaming, cursing, howling with pain, whining for food, having acquired the instincts of the lower animal and lost the higher attributes of man. And on the streets and roads, women and children, once modest and self-respecting, cried, whined and lied with the shameless audacity of the professional beggar.[1] These were among the most direful results of the famine, and some of them remained long after the famine had passed away.

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[1] Walpole, iv. 352-4.

[2] O'Connor, *The Parnell Movement*, pp. 67-68, 73.

[3] O'Connor, pp. 42-43, 54.

[4] O'Rorke, p. 496.

[5] *Last Conquest*, p. 218.

[1] O'Connor, pp. 83-84.

CHAPTER IX

O'Connell's Successors

THE Irish peasant's history has been a sad one. While the clan system flourished, the petty wars of contending chiefs, their restlessness, their jealousies, their exactions left the peasant without hope of peace, protection of property or incentive to industry ; and the Anglo-Norman lords extended to him the burdens, but not the blessings, both of Brehon and feudal law. The religious changes of the sixteenth century greatly embittered the relations between the ruling and subject classes. The confiscations and plantations of the seventeenth century accentuated and perpetuated the antagonisms which prevailed ; and when Protestants had been invested with lands and power, and Catholics had been deprived of both, the relations established between landlord and tenant were much more difficult for the peasant to endure than that which had existed between lord and vassal, or between clansman and chief.

In the Irish Protestant Parliament of the eighteenth century the landlords' power was supreme. To the lands they held confiscation was their common title.[1] It was the Catholics around them who had been despoiled, and the main object of the Penal Code was to impoverish and degrade them, to leave them without the power to rebel, the hope of improving their condition, or even the spirit to complain. And to this extent the Penal Code succeeded. Native and English writers of the eighteenth century—Swift and Prior, Boulter, Berkeley, Dobbs and Young[2]—had pictured the condition of the peasants of their time as in the lowest scale of human misery. Newenham and Wakefield, who wrote in the early part of the next century, could only show that this condition was not improved by the Act of Union; and De Beaumont, who studied the Irish question with the unprejudiced eyes of a foreigner, declared in 1837 that the miseries endured by the Irish peasant were worse than those of the Indian in his forests or those of the negro in his chains.[1]

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[1] *Lord Clare's Speech*, 1800.

[2] O'Brien's *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii. 40-41.

The British Parliament had at no time been just where Irish Catholic tenants were concerned. Its sympathies had been with the Irish Parliament in its enactment of the Penal Code; its reluctance to grant civil rights to Catholics was shown long after the era of penal legislation had passed away; and its obstinate resistance to emancipation was specially discreditable in view of the promises made at the Union by Pitt and Castlereagh. The fact was that England had long continued to regard the Irish Catholics as foes—men ever ready to rise in rebellion at home, or assist the enemies of England abroad. Disdaining to conciliate them, she refused to allay their discontent, and preferred to have them helpless and poor. But the Irish landlords, on the contrary, she regarded with special affection. These men of her own race and religion she had planted on Irish soil in the midst of a hostile population. She ruled Ireland through them, loaded them with power and privileges, gratified their every caprice, condoned their numerous misdeeds, protected them from the wrath of those whom they had treated as worse than slaves, and this with the whole force of a mighty empire. Every secret society which arose, from the Whiteboys to the Ribbonmen, owed its origin to oppressive landlordism;[2] almost every outrage perpetrated might be traced to the same cause, and this every thoughtful writer and speaker was ready to acknowledge.[3]

But Parliament would not interfere. At the cost of a few shillings the landlord could obtain an ejectment decree, whether the rent had been paid or not;[4] he could raise the rent at will;

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[1] De Beaumont, *L'Irlande, sociale, politique et religieuse*, p. 176.

[2] O'Brien, ii. 77, 89, 93.

[3] *Ibid.* 96-107; G. C. Lewis, *Local Disturbances in Ireland*, pp. 32, 97.

[4] Mitchel's *Last Conquest*, p. 66.

he could distrain the tenants' growing crops for rent and sell them when ripe, charging the expense of doing so on the tenant.[1] He could make what arbitrary estate rules he pleased, could send the tenants' cattle to the pound; and if the tenant summoned the offending landlord or bailiff, he knew what to expect from a landlord magistrate on the Bench.[2] If he merely complained he might have his rent raised; if he complained publicly he was regarded as a disloyal subject; if he joined a secret society he might be sent to prison or to the scaffold; and if disturbances arose, the landlords cried out for repressive laws, and Parliament promptly responded by giving them a Coercion Act.

Despairing of Parliament, O'Connell looked to Repeal as the great remedy, and agitated the Land question but little. But Mr. Brownlow in 1829 brought in a Bill for the reclamation of waste lands; Mr. Poulett Scope, an old friend to Ireland, introduced a Land Bill in 1834; and Mr. Sharman Crawford brought in Bills in 1836 and 1837, merely giving the tenant compensation for disturbance. Not one of these measures passed into law.[3] Parliament would do nothing but pass Coercion Acts. The landlords and tenants were left face to face: the former evicted; the latter, driven to desperation, had recourse to secret societies and outrage; and in the desultory agrarian warfare which went on, the landlord's writ was met by the peasant's gun.[4]

Sir Robert Peel had no affection for Ireland and little for reform. He was Irish Secretary in 1814, when Judge Fletcher advised the Grand Jurors of Wicklow to give their tenants a property in their holdings, assuring them that such action on the part of the landlords would be more efficacious for the repression of outrages than the cord and the gibbet.[5] But

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[1] Bryce, pp. 263-5.

[2] O'Brien, ii. 111-12; Perraud's *Ireland under English Rule*, pp. 84-87. "Landlords there exercise their rights with a hand of iron, and disregard their duties with a forehead of brass" (*Times*, Feb. 25, 1847).

[3] *Parnell Movement*, pp. 16-17.

[4] O'Brien, ii. 114-15.

[5] *Ibid.* ii. 99.

Peel shut his eyes and closed his ears, dined and feasted with Orangemen and landlords, and in 1817 passed a Bill through Parliament cheapening and making easier the process of eviction.[1] In the years that followed, whether in office or out of it, he was the steady advocate of coercion for Ireland. But in 1843 he was for the second time Prime Minister, and was face to face with a menacing agitation under O'Connell. It was useless to ignore the fact that coercion had not pacified Ireland, that she was still discontented, that her discontent found expression in outrage, and that outrages arose from agrarian disputes. For the purpose of ascertaining how far the land system was responsible for discontent and disturbance, and if Parliament might with public advantage interfere, Peel in 1843 appointed a Commission, and in 1845 it issued its report. The five commissioners were all landlords—Sir R. Ferguson, Messrs. Redington, Wynne and Hamilton being Irish, and the chairman, Lord Devon, being an Englishman, with an Irish property; and from a landlord commission O'Connell expected little. He thought it would be as reasonable to consult butchers about the Lenten fast as to consult landlords about the rights of farmers.[2] His judgment was not much at fault. Under an old custom the Ulster tenants might sell the goodwill of their holdings, and had fixity of tenure as long as their rents were paid; and an obvious recommendation would be to extend these proprietary rights to the tenants of the other provinces, especially as the arrangement in Ulster had worked well. But the Devon Commissioners, regarding the Ulster custom as an encroachment on landlord rights, did not wish it extended, and they refused to countenance any restriction of the landlord's power to capriciously raise rents and evict, nor had they a word of condemnation for absentees. But they recognized the extreme poverty of the lower classes, the exactions of the middlemen and the unsatisfactory nature of the relations between them and their tenants; and while they wished congestion to be relieved by emigration, and labour given by reclamation of waste lands, they also recommended that tenants' improvements, in part at least, should be protected by law.

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[1] Mitchel, *History of Ireland*, ii. 150; Bryce, pp. 233-5.

[2] Mitchel, ii. 199; *O'Connell's Correspondence*, pp. 351-2.

Peel's government was not likely to embark on heroic land legislation, and only the last recommendation of the Devon Commission was embodied in a Bill and introduced into the House of Lords by Stanley, now Lord Derby. He had just succeeded to his father's title, and was well known to have little sympathy with Irish tenants; and his Bill was little more than a shadow. A Commissioner of Improvements was to be appointed to whom the tenant was to apply when about to improve. If the tenant failed to notify the Commissioner, if having notified he failed to get his approval, or if his improvement was neither building nor draining nor fencing, in all these cases he got nothing. Yet even this miserable Bill the Lords would not have, and so strong was their hostility to it that it was withdrawn. A similar measure was introduced in the following year by Lord Lincoln; but Peel's ministry was turned out of office on the Irish Coercion Bill, and thus time was not given for forcing Stanley's Bill into law. For the remaining years of his life Peel was out of office, and had therefore no further opportunity as a minister of handling the thorny subject of Irish land.[1]

In 1841 there were 491,000 Irish families living in mud-hovels with only one hearth, forty-three per cent of the entire agricultural tenantry living in one-roomed houses. In 1847 the number of small holdings exceeded 1,300,000, about a million being less than five acres in extent, and nearly 700,000 under one acre.[2] The operation of Mr. Gregory's quarter-acre clause in the case of those needing outdoor relief soon left many of these holdings unoccupied, and thousands of the mud-hovels were emptied or destroyed by fever and hunger. But these agents of depopulation were not enough to satisfy the impatience of the landlords. Tenants from whom the last farthing might be squeezed were tolerated, because they were more profitable on the land than cattle; but tenants who could pay no rent, who entered the workhouses or received outdoor relief, and as such were a burden upon the land, were worse than the barren fig-tree, and deserving of a similar fate; and the great clearances were continued throughout the famine, and long after the famine had passed away. Pity and kindness the vast majority of landlords had never shown where their tenantry were concerned, and they showed neither now. In the depths of winter as in summer, whole families—the sick, the infirm, the aged—were ruthlessly cast out, and often when not a penny of rent was due. In one Union 6000 families were evicted in a single year. On one small estate 120 houses were levelled; on another, 23 in a single day; in a fortnight 1200 persons were made homeless; within a few months 1000 cabins were thrown down; whole districts were cleared to make way for larger farms. Forbidden to use the ruined houses from which they had been driven, the evicted lived behind hedges and ditches until cold and hunger drove them to the workhouse. In one case five families lived in a single room only twelve feet square; in a piggery five feet by four a widow and her three children lived for three weeks; a woman ill of dysentery lay down in a cow-shed, and the inspector coming to see her was ankle-deep in mud. Even such lodging as this the landlords grudged. They ordered the evicted to be cleared off their properties, and prohibited the tenants still remaining from taking them in. Any shelter put up was pulled down, and in one case a temporary hut of this kind was set on fire by the landlord's bailiff, while the evicted tenant was at the relief works and his wife and children were gathering shellfish on the neighbouring strand. All this happened in the Kilrush Union within the year ending May 1849, and is taken from a Government inspector's unadorned and unemotional report. On a bleak hillside in Galway on New Year's Eve, in the midst of a violent storm, a whole family was thrown out. For the sake of their children who were sick the parents begged even one night's shelter, but they begged in vain. And there were thousands of other cases rivalling these in barbarity.[1]

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[1] Walpole's *England*, iv. 255-8.

[2] O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii. 146-7; Bryce, p. 207.

There were words of sympathy in Parliament and even of indignation; and an Act was passed providing that forty-eight hours' notice of an eviction should be given the relieving officer, that no eviction could take place between sunset and sunrise, nor on Good Friday or Christmas Day. But there was no real redress of grievances, no staying of the evictor's hand. Sharman Crawford's Land Bills of 1848 and 1850, extending the Ulster custom to all Ireland, were rejected with scorn, and even the milder measures of the Irish Secretary, Lord Lincoln, were not passed.[2] Mild as these latter were, they were looked at askance by Lord John Russell; and as for Sharman Crawford's Bills, he declared them to be subversive of the rights of property, measures which no Government with a sense of justice could pass.[3] But he passed a Coercion Act in 1847 and another in 1848, and the latter was renewed in the two following years. And the Act providing notice to be given of every eviction was easily evaded, and the great clearances went on with all their attendant horrors.

The fact was that British statesmen of both parties viewed with complacency this thinning of the Irish peasantry, and thought that if in addition the bankrupt landlords were replaced by solvent ones, and especially by solvent Englishmen, there would be no further need for legislative interference in the question of Irish land. Many of the Irish landlords, indeed, had not the power to do good, even if they wished. Spendthrifts themselves, or inheriting an encumbered estate from spendthrift ancestors, they were hampered at every turn by restrictions which went back to feudal times, by entail and primogeniture and complication of title; their payments to mortgagees or to members of their own family swallowed up their entire income; and necessity itself, and often inclination as well, compelled them to deal harshly with their tenants. But if Englishmen with money took their place, these would set up in Ireland the relations of mutual help and forbearance which existed between English landlords and their tenants, and all would be well. With this hope the Encumbered Estates Act passed into law in 1849.[1] It set up a Court of Commissioners authorized to deal with encumbered estates in Ireland, to sell them on the petition of owner or creditor, to apportion the price between the different claimants, to grant a title to the purchaser indefeasible in law. Under its provisions, within a few years property to the extent of £20,000,000 changed hands. Yet it was a failure. On the one hand, injustice was done to the occupying tenants, for no account was taken of the improvements they might have effected. On the other, the owners suffered, for the amount of land offered for sale exceeded the demand, and many estates were sold for less than their value. Nor did many English purchasers come. In the vast majority of cases the new men were Irish and of the shopkeeping class—men ambitious to be enrolled among the aristocracy. They bought land with the trader's instinct for profit; they bought as they bought their tea, in the cheapest market, and as a good investment; they had no care and no feeling for the tenants, whom they rack-rented and evicted without scruple; and the only effect of the Encumbered Estates Act was to set up a new and meaner class of tyrants in place of those it had pulled down.[2]

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[1] *Parnell Movement*, pp. 54-77; O'Brien, ii. 426.

[2] *Two Centuries of Irish History*, p. 427.

[3] *Parnell Movement*, p. 73.

When the year 1850 dawned the outlook was dark. The famine had not yet quite spent itself, and more than 240,000 persons filled the workhouses. Rents were raised, even in Ulster, and in spite of the Ulster custom the clearances went on. The tide of emigration rose higher and higher. The population was rapidly dwindling, and all over the country cattle and sheep were being substituted for men. From Lord John Russell nothing could be got but coercion; and nothing

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[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 86-90.

[2] O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii. 150-51; *Parnell Movement*, pp. 68-69; Perraud, pp. 164-8.

DEPTFORD
LIBRARIES

could be effected in Parliament by the corrupt and incapable men whom the Irish electors sent there. Driven to desperation, the peasants had recourse to secret societies. There had been a long succession of them—Whiteboys, Whitefeet, Terryalts, Rockites, Ribbonmen and others; but by this time the Ribbon Society had distanced all its rivals—like Aaron's rod it had swallowed up them all. With its lodges, its secret meetings, its oaths and passwords and signs, it had extended over the land. Recruited from the peasantry, it watched the peasant's interests and avenged his wrongs, and the landlord or agent who pulled down the peasant's cabin was laid low by the Ribbonman's avenging hand.[1] These methods, however, were abhorrent to many of the tenants' best friends, and in 1850 a Tenant Defence Society was formed at Callan in Kilkenny, and within a few months similar societies were formed elsewhere, some of them in Ulster. Holding their meetings public and keeping within the law, they relied on mutual co-operation, on the pressure of public opinion, on having honest representatives in Parliament. If only these various associations would combine into one national organization, if north and south would agree to sink their differences for the tenant's sake, much could be done; and in the hope of forming such an organization, a circular was sent broadcast, signed by men of different religions, and asking the tenants' friends to meet in Dublin.

This Tenant Right Conference met in the City Assembly Rooms, William Street, on the 6th of August, and was a remarkable gathering. For the moment the Boyne was bridged, and north and south were brought together. The chairman of the meeting was Dr. MacNight, the Presbyterian proprietor of the *Banner of Ulster*. Scattered around the room were tenants, a few liberal landlords, Presbyterian ministers and Catholic priests; Mr. Godkin, the editor of the Protestant *Derry Standard*; Mr. Maguire of the Catholic *Cork Examiner*; Mr. Greer, an Ulster Presbyterian lawyer; Dr. Gray of the *Freeman*, and Mr. Duffy of the *Nation*, both of whom had shared imprisonment with O'Connell; Mr. Frederick Lucas, the Catholic editor of the Catholic *Tablet*. The last named was probably the ablest of them all. An English barrister and a Quaker, he had become a convert to Catholicism, and in 1840 the editor of the *Tablet*, then for the first time established as the organ of the English Catholics. His great ability as a writer, his immense information, his manly and militant attitude when abuses were to be attacked or rights to be redressed, soon made his paper a power. But the vigour with which he assailed England's treatment of Ireland, his support of Repeal, his admiration for O'Connell, his fierce onslaughts on the Irish landlords and his outspoken sympathy with their rack-rented tenants made him enemies among the high-placed English Catholics, and in 1850 he and the *Tablet* moved to Dublin.[1] At the head of a great Irish newspaper, he appealed to a larger audience and became more powerful than ever. The Irish landlords he considered utterly hopeless; he would as soon expect to see them reformed as to see the devil kneeling at the footstool of God.[2] Nor had he any hope that anything would, or could, be done for the tenants with such a party as was then in Parliament—a party of self-seekers and place-hunters, incapable, dishonest and insincere. He believed, however, that if they were replaced by honest and independent men much could be done; that any association which would send to Parliament even twelve members of capacity and practical skill would revolutionize the Imperial Parliament on Irish affairs.[3] These views found ready acceptance at the Tenant Right Conference, and besides the resolutions passed demanding for the tenants fixity of tenure, fair rents and free sale, and an equitable arrangement regarding arrears which had accumulated during the famine, it was also resolved that henceforth all Parliamentary candidates should pledge themselves to be independent and oppose any and every British party which refused to concede the tenants' demands.[4]

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[1] *New Ireland*, chap. iv.

During the next twelve months a vigorous propaganda was carried on both in the Press and on the platform; the Tenant Right movement made great strides, and in the General Election of 1852 forty members were returned pledged to Tenant Rights and Independent Opposition. Lucas was returned for Meath, Gavan Duffy for New Ross, John Francis Maguire for Dungarvan, George Henry Moore for Mayo—all men of the highest attainments, and all men of unblemished honour. The General Election over, the new Irish party met in Dublin, and a resolution was carried, with only one dissentient, declaring it essential "that all members returned on Tenant Right principles should hold themselves perfectly independent, and in opposition to all Governments which do not make it part of their policy, and a Cabinet question, to give to the tenantry of Ireland a measure embodying the principles of Mr. Sharman Crawford's Bill."[1]

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[1] Edward Lucas's *Life of Lucas*, i. 370.
[2] *Ibid.* 256.
[3] *Ibid.* 315.
[4] *Ibid.* 385.

In the meantime other events happened which already had proved hurtful, and in the end proved ruinous to the tenants' cause. Towards the close of 1850 the Pope changed the titles of the English hierarchy into archbishops and bishops of English places, from being archbishops and bishops *in partibus infidelium.* Dr. Wiseman, raised to the Cardinalate, became Archbishop of Westminster, and as such wrote a pastoral "given out of the Flaminian gate at Rome," and announcing that henceforth he was to rule the Catholics of Middlesex, Hertford, Essex and other counties named.[2] In all this there was no interference with the English State Church, and in fact Cardinal Wiseman, as Archbishop of Westminster, had no more extended powers over the English Catholics of the counties named than he had as Archbishop *in partibus infidelium.* But the English Protestant always prides himself on his Protestantism, and sometimes on his hatred of the Pope; the loss of Newman and others in recent years had made him irritable; and the sight of a Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster appeared to his excited vision as the destruction of the work done at the Reformation. The Queen was to be dethroned, the fires of Smithfield to be rekindled, the Scarlet Woman to be set on high in Protestant England. The Bishop of Durham wrote a letter to the Premier complaining of these acts of Papal aggression, and Lord John Russell replied that it was certainly intolerable.[1] He denounced the Pope's action as insolent and insidious, inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy and with the rights of the English bishops, and declared that England would not submit her mind and conscience to a foreign yoke. The Durham Letter was interpreted as a declaration of war against the Catholic Church, and a storm of fierce fanaticism arose which recalled the days of Titus Oates and Lord George Gordon. The Protestant Bishops publicly expressed their indignation; their clergy were not behindhand in vehemence and clamour; the Corporation of London and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge presented loyal addresses to the throne; the Sheriffs held County meetings, where language of the coarsest insult was used; the lower classes burned the Pope and Cardinal Wiseman in effigy;[2] and when Parliament met in the following February, a Bill was promised to make penal the "recent assumptions of ecclesiastical titles conferred by a Foreign Power."[3]

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[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 147-52, 167.

[2] Lucas, i. 417-20.

Some of the finest intellects in the English Protestant Church were disgusted at this hysterical bigotry, believing it to be without reason and without justice, and utterly unworthy of a great nation; and when the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was introduced into Parliament, it was launched on a tempestuous sea. Lord Aberdeen would give no support to what was a penal law; Lord Brougham presented petitions against it; Sir James Graham's attitude was that of Lord Aberdeen; Mr. Roundell Palmer could not see that it was called for; Mr. Gladstone denounced it as opposed to the principles of religious liberty; Mr. Roebuck failed to understand how, if Cardinal Wiseman chose to put on a big hat and red stockings, he was thereby making any aggression on the Queen's prerogative. The Irish members assailed the Bill; the bigots wanted a stringent penal law; and Lord John Russell, deserted by his

[1] *Annual Register*, 1851 (copy of letter).

[2] *Ibid.* 1850, pp. 198-201; *Chronicle*, pp. 138-52.

[3] *Annual Register*, p. 3.

friends, despised by his foes, trembling for the existence of his ministry, which his own folly had imperilled, consented to changes and modifications, until at last the only penal provision left was one prohibiting, under a penalty of £100, any archbishop, bishop or dean of the Catholic Church assuming a title from any place in the United Kingdom. Thus amended the Bill became law.[1] But it was never enforced. With characteristic boldness Dr. MacHale at once wrote a public letter signing himself, as he had hitherto, "John, Archbishop of Tuam," and he did so with impunity. The storm of bigotry had then died down in England; Lord John shrank from prosecuting an archbishop, and *Punch* of that day described him as having written up "No Popery" on the walls, and then having run away from what he had written.

Had Ireland followed the example of Dr. MacHale it would have been better. The time was past when penal laws could be enforced, and Ireland, which had withstood the fury of the Penal Code, ought to have treated the Ecclesiastical Titles Act with dignified contempt. A different attitude, however, was adopted. The whole country was agitated with groundless alarms and groundless fears, as if the eighteenth century could be brought back to life and the horrors of the penal times could be renewed. Meetings were held, speeches made, fiery resolutions passed, letters and articles in newspapers written, and a Catholic Defence Association was formed.[2] This new body was disliked by the Tenant Right League, as being likely to revive sectarian rancour in the popular ranks, and thus cause division and weakness. But by a small group of Irish members of Parliament it was welcomed. The hypocrite often hides his treachery under the cloak of religious zeal, and these men were now all for religion. They fought the Titles Bill inch by inch, exhausted all the resources of Parliament in obstructing it, and while they were regarded at home as the Irish Brigade, fighting as of old the battles of Ireland abroad, by Englishmen they were derisively referred to as the Pope's

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[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 7, 43-75; *Chronicle*, pp. 457-9 (copy of the Act).

[2] Lucas, i. 451-3.

Brass Band. They were few in number, the chief of them being John Sadleir and William Keogh.

The former was a solicitor with a capacity for finance, and with social and political ambitions, and disdaining the humble rôle of a country attorney, he entered Parliament in 1847, settled in London, became a Company promoter and director and a familiar figure on the Stock Exchange, and established a bank with many branches in his native Tipperary. Neither an orator nor a debater, he was credited with great financial ability and enormous wealth. He established a paper, the *Telegraph*, which was ultra-Catholic in tone; brought two cousins and a nephew into Parliament; and when the General Election of 1852 was over, the whole Brigade, eight in number, were his followers, and most of them, if not all, looked to him for pecuniary support.

Intellectually Keogh was Sadleir's superior, and was cast in a very different mould. A barrister without briefs, a lawyer ignorant of law, careless, convivial, unprincipled, impecunious and intemperate, he had much of the vulgar demagogue and much of the bravo in his composition. Fluent of speech, he excelled in the turmoil of a contested election. His energy of voice and gesture, his strength of language, his readiness of repartee, his coarse humour, his flattery of national and even local prejudices, his reckless courage captivated the mob; the use of bribery, with borrowed money, did the rest; and in 1847, and again in 1852, he was returned for Athlone. At the latter date it was noticed that Keogh and his friends were reluctant to join the Tenant League or embarrass themselves by pledges about Independent Opposition. But the tenants were in no humour to be cajoled by fulsome adulation of Catholic ecclesiastics and loud protestations of attachment to the Catholic Church. The fact was that the Brigadiers were distrusted, and attacked by the national journals—the *Tablet*, the *Nation* and the *Freeman's Journal*; and when one of their number, Dr. Power, M.P. for Cork, became Governor of St. Lucia, the cry was raised that all were place-hunters, and at a meeting in Cork, Keogh was attacked to his face. But his audacity was boundless. He indignantly repelled the charges made against him; declared, as he had at other meetings already, that he cared nothing for Whigs or Tories, and would support neither unless they did justice to the tenants. He had supported Sharman Crawford's Bill, and promised with an oath that he and his friends would always give it "an unflinching, undeviating, unalterable support." All doubts disappeared when the whole Brigade attended the Tenant Right Conference at the close of the election, and when Keogh himself proposed the resolution pledging the whole party to Tenant Right and Independent Opposition.[1]

There were then three parties in England—the Tories, the Whigs and the Peelites. The last named, having separated from the main body of the Tories in 1846 on the question of the repeal of the Corn Laws, had since maintained a separate existence, and were still called Peelites, though Peel himself had died in 1850. With such able men as Gladstone and Graham and Sidney Herbert, they were strong in talent though too weak in numbers to form a Government, and on most public questions they acted with the Whigs. On the Ecclesiastical Tithes Bill, however, the Peelites and Whigs disagreed; and Lord John Russell, weakened by that mischievous measure, was turned out of office in February 1852, and was replaced by the Tories under Derby and Disraeli.[2] The General Election of that year gave the latter a compact party of more than 300, a party stronger than either Whigs or Peelites—almost as strong as a combination of both—yet not strong enough to carry on the Government. Unable to attract Peelite support, the Tories looked to the Tenant Right Party, and in the hope of obtaining their co-operation the Irish Attorney-General, Mr. Napier, introduced a Land Bill. It was a distinct advance on the preceding Bills, for it contained provisions compensating the tenant for his improvements in case of disturbance. Because of this and because the Bill, being a Tory one, was sure to pass the House of Lords, Lucas and

[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 158-67; *Parnell Movement*, pp. 92-98.

[2] *Greville's Memoirs*, vi. 455, 460.

Duffy favoured its acceptance; but Keogh denounced it as worthless, and was able to carry a majority of the Tenant Righters with him; and on Disraeli's budget the Irish joined the Opposition, and the Tories were driven from office. A coalition Government of Whigs and Peelites was then formed under Lord Aberdeen,[1] and in Ireland there were high hopes that Independent Opposition would do great things, and that a better Bill even than Napier's would be secured. These hopes were soon blighted. When the list of the minor appointments in the new Government was published, just as the New Year dawned, it was discovered that Keogh was Irish Solicitor-General, John Sadleir a Lord of the Treasury, Edmond O'Flaherty a Commissioner of Income Tax, and Monsel, Clerk of the Ordnance.[2] They had taken office without consulting their colleagues of the Tenant Right Party, and without obtaining any promise of legislation from the Government; they had justified the suspicions of Lucas and Duffy, who had disliked them from the beginning, and the country which believed in them they had shamefully betrayed.[3]

Such treachery could not be permitted to pass unpunished, and when Sadleir presented himself for re-election at Carlow the Tenant Righters supported his Tory opponent, placing the latter at the head of the poll.[4] It was at least equally important to punish Keogh, but the opposition given to him was ineffective, and he was returned for Athlone; and Sadleir soon found a seat in Sligo town, where mobs were ready to cheer him for money, and electors ready to sell their votes. Had the Tenant Righters and clergy acted together this would not be, and other members of Parliament would have been debarred from following the example set by Sadleir and Keogh. But the Tenant League had begun already to dissolve. The Ulster men as Presbyterians had a friendly feeling for the Presbyterian Lord John Russell, and were reluctant to embarrass him. Some of them also disliked Lucas, whom they regarded as a bigoted Catholic; and nothing could be more repugnant to a Presbyterian with the old Puritan intolerance of Popery. And there were others, not so disinterested, who wished to stand well with Keogh, the Solicitor-General, and perhaps get one of the many offices it would be in his power to give. On the Catholic side, John O'Connell continued to support Lord John Russell, even after his Durham Letter; and however worthless John O'Connell himself might be, the name of O'Connell was one to conjure with, and the son of the liberator was sure to have supporters among the electorate and imitators in Parliament.[1] But the most serious defection was that of the priests. Dispirited by the failure and death of O'Connell and the horrors of the famine, with the whole resources of Government and a powerful aristocracy against them, the people were powerless without their aid; and it was because of that aid that the Tenant League had been established, and that so many Tenant Right candidates at the elections had headed the polls. Now the clergy were divided, and a large number of them had gone over to the enemy. Priests fought for Sadleir at Sligo, and for the Government candidate Fortescue in Louth; and at Athlone the Bishop of Elphin, Dr. Browne, openly supported Keogh.

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[1] *Greville*, vii. 29. [2] *Ibid.* 27. [3] *New Ireland*, p. 168.

[4] *Moore Hall Papers*—Moore to Sadleir, Jan. 1853—a scathing indictment of Sadleir's public conduct.

Their conduct was approved by the new Archbishop of Dublin, Paul Cullen. Within certain limits he was an able man. He knew much of theology and canon law, of Scripture and Church history, was absolutely and unselfishly devoted to the interests of his Church; a man of great piety and zeal, of strength of will and tenacity of purpose. But outside his merely professional knowledge his general reading was not extensive: on many subjects he was ill-informed; his political views were narrow and illiberal; he could see but one side of a question, and slowly assimilated new ideas.[2] Educated at Rome, he became Rector of the Irish College, was appointed

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[1] *Moore Hall Papers*—Moore to the *Nation*, Jan. 1853, showing that but twenty Irish members voted against the Titles Bill.

[2] Vide *The Writings of Cardinal Cullen*, edited by Dr. Moran, Dublin, 1882.

Archbishop of Armagh in 1849, and in 1852, on the death of Dr. Murray, became Archbishop of Dublin. At the same time he was appointed Apostolic Delegate, a position which gave him a supervising authority over the whole Catholic Church in Ireland, and made him all-powerful at Rome. At Armagh he favoured the Tenant League; but at Dublin his policy was changed, and he soon was much more friendly with Sadleir and Keogh than with Duffy and Lucas. A mind never liberal had received a fatal bias from the scenes of violence and crime he saw in Rome in 1849, when a liberal-minded Pope was driven from the city by Garibaldi and Mazzini, at the head of atheists and assassins. With a horror of popular movements, he regarded the Young Irelanders as on the same level with the Italian Carbonari; the Tenant League nothing more than the Young Ireland movement revived; and Duffy he called the Irish Mazzini. He seemed to have a distrust of superior ability, and to have disliked Lucas because of his courage and capacity. Priests and bishops who were outspoken and independent he specially disliked. He expected that all, even the archbishops, should submit to his guidance; and when a diocese became vacant, he wished that no one should be appointed but one whose views were subservient to his own. He carefully noted what priests attended Tenant Right meetings, and then promptly pointed out to their bishops what their duty was. Father Doyle of Ross, for instance, was changed to an obscure mission in 1853,[1] and a little later Father O'Shea and Father Keefe, both of Callan, were interdicted from attending public meetings at all.[2] But Dr. Cullen had no objection to bishops and priests who supported the Government candidates. He had no word of condemnation for Dr. Browne of Elphin for supporting Keogh at Athlone, nor for the priests who aided Sadleir in Carlow and Sligo, and none for those who stood by Fortescue in Louth. His system was to centralize all power in himself, to have bishops, priests, and laymen, even in politics, obedient to his will. "There was to be," said a nationalist journal, "no Priests in politics—except Bishops;

[1] Duffy, *Four Years of Irish History*, pp. 246-9. [2] *Ibid.* 320-22.

no Bishops in politics—except Archbishops; no Archbishops in politics except the Apostolic Delegate."[1]

It was widely believed that Dr. Cullen's policy had the approbation of the Pope, but the Tenant Righters did not share this belief. The heart of Pio Nono was kind, and they thought that if the whole truth was placed before him, he would distinguish between the Roman leaders, Mazzini and Garibaldi, and the Irish ones, Duffy and Lucas, between the Carbonari and Tenant Righters; he would recognize that the latter had the strong faith of their ancestors and their warm attachment to the See of Peter, and that in defending such against the proselytizer and the evictor the Irish priests were treading in the footsteps of that divine Master who hunted the money-changers from the Temple and uttered so many woes against the Pharisees. It was therefore resolved to appeal to the Pope, and with the approval of the Tenant Righters, lay and clerical, Lucas left for Rome early in 1855. His honesty and sincerity, his zeal for religion, his courage, his splendid abilities marked him out as the ablest champion they could select. Disdaining to answer the charge of being a bad Catholic or associated with such, he vigorously attacked Dr. Cullen's political conduct, charged him with duplicity, with a want of charity and candour and truth towards those whom he opposed, and undoubtedly he made a strong case. Both Cardinal Wiseman and Dr. MacHale, who were then at Rome, were impressed and convinced by it, and had he lived he might have convinced the Pope.[2] But he complained that he received little support from the Irish priests. Reluctant, no doubt, to bring trouble on themselves or their bishops, they shrank from coming into conflict with Dr. Cullen, who was determined and tenacious, and had such influence at Rome that it seemed hopeless to contend with him. In addition to this Lucas got ill, and the fact that he met with such discouragement, and was unable to complete his case at Rome, weighed so heavily on his spirits that he had to return to England. In the month of October following he died at Staines. His love for Ireland was as great as that of Drummond, and with equal truth he might say that he lost his life in her service.[1]

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[1] Duffy, p. 377.

[2] *Moore Hall Papers*—Lucas to Moore, Rome, 4th May 1855. At that date Lucas was hopeful of success. "I am in very good spirits and very good hope. I think the case stands very well if I am not unlucky enough to spoil it by my long statement. Long as it is, I am assured the Pope will himself read it and consider it before sending it to Propaganda."

A few months later, Mr. Duffy resigned his seat in Parliament and sailed for Australia. With the clergy prohibited from supporting the popular movement, it could not endure; with pledge-breaking allowed to go unpunished, a Parliamentary party was a sham; and already of those members who had been elected in 1852 to support Tenant Right and Independent Opposition, twenty-seven had gone over to the Government.[2] In these circumstances, to rouse the people to renewed activity and recreate an efficient Parliamentary party would have required the genius of O'Connell. Duffy felt unequal to the task, as he felt convinced that nothing could be done by Parliamentary action until existing conditions were changed, and hence he left Ireland for a distant land. There yet remained Mr. G. H. Moore, the member for Mayo. A country gentleman with cultured tastes, a landlord who sympathized with the tenants, a politician but not a place-hunter, he sought for no favour from any party, and made no promises to the people which he did not keep. With many years' Parliamentary experience, he had an accurate knowledge of public questions and of the temper of Parliament, could speak perhaps better than Lucas and write as eloquently as Duffy, and at the head of a party would have been a much more effective Parliamentary leader than either. But these great qualities were marred by serious defects, and Duffy, whose admiration for his abilities was unbounded, describes him as impatient of labour, of contradiction and of dulness. He wanted tenacity of purpose, the patience to wait for results that might be long in coming, the conviction of ultimate success which inspires even a beaten party with hope. His contempt for mediocrity must have often lost him the support of men who could do useful, though not brilliant work; his sarcasm was often bitter and not easily forgiven; and in debate he often irritated rather than convinced his opponents.[1] Yet he was for many years a large figure in politics, and when Lucas was dead and Duffy in exile, Moore was almost the only man in Parliament to whom Ireland could with confidence appeal.

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[1] *Life of Lucas*, ii. 143-470.

[2] *League of North and South*, pp. 322-4.

During these years the changes of Government were frequent, and the state of English parties was such that the Irish members, had they acted together, might have done much. Having the balance of power, they could have defeated Aberdeen as they had defeated Derby, for the Coalition Ministry was one of "suspended opinions and smothered animosities,"[2] and could have been easily overthrown. Palmerston's first Ministry, which succeeded in 1855, was soon weakened by the secession of its ablest members, Gladstone, Graham and Bright, and though strengthened by the General Election of 1857, it was defeated in the next year, and succeeded by the Derby-Disraeli Government, which, however, only lasted for a single year.

Palmerston's second Ministry lasted from 1859 till his death in 1865—a long time, with only a majority of twenty.[3] His strength lay in the fact that an Irish Independent Party had ceased to exist, and that the Tories tolerated him. He was in fact more opposed to reform than most of themselves, and his meddlesome foreign policy, his bragging about England's power, and his insolent hectoring of foreign nations, made him generally popular with the masses at home.

Mr. Keogh remained unaffected by these changes. He saw no reason to sacrifice office for principles, and Lord Aberdeen's Solicitor-General became Attorney-General and Judge under Palmerston. His confederates of the Brass Band were less fortunate. In 1854 Edmond O'Flaherty, Commissioner of Income Tax, fled the country, leaving in circulation forged bills amounting to £15,000. Two years later John Sadleir committed suicide, having ruined thousands of Munster farmers who had invested their money in his bank. In the next year James Sadleir, having been found guilty of fraud, was expelled from Parliament.[1] The other pledge-breakers did not fare so well as Keogh nor as badly as Sadleir, though they were equally corrupt, and equally the slaves of Government. The result was that Irish grievances remained unredressed. At the election of 1857 Mr. Moore was elected for Mayo, but was unseated on petition, and two years later he was defeated at Kilkenny.[2] There remained about half-a-dozen who could be relied on, and of these only Mr. Maguire, who sat for Dungarvan, was a man of much capacity. So forgotten was Ireland in Parliament that it was rarely mentioned in the Queen's Speech; and Sergeant Shee's Land Bill of 1855, Mr. Moore's of the two following years, and Mr. Maguire's of 1858 were all rejected. Palmerston's Ministry in 1860 passed a Bill giving the tenants compensation for future improvements, provided such were made with the express consent of the landlords.[3] No further concessions would be given, and Lord Palmerston declared in 1865, a few weeks before his death, that he utterly repudiated the doctrine of Tenant Right, and that in his view tenant right was landlord wrong.[4]

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[1] Duffy, pp. 227-8.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1855.

[3] *Ashley's Life*, ii.

In the meantime Dr. Cullen, who had supported the Whigs in 1855, supported the Tories in 1859; but though he earned the goodwill of Government by doing so, and the praises of the Tories, he was unable to obtain concessions either from Whigs or Tories. In spite of Catholic objections to the composition of the National Board of Education and to the character of some of the school-books, it was not until 1853 that Whateley's books were disallowed, and not until 1860 were the Catholic Commissioners made equal in number to the Protestant. And the Catholic demand for denominational schools, where only Catholic children were taught, was emphatically refused. The rich Protestant Church, with its enormous revenues, had its rich Royal Free Schools and its Erasmus Smith Schools, while the Catholic Church had to depend on its diocesan colleges, but not a penny would Parliament grant to redress the inequality. The Queen's Colleges were maintained and endowed, though a Papal Rescript in 1847 described them as "involving grave danger to the faith of Catholics"; a second Rescript in 1848 declared this danger to be intrinsic; and a third in 1850 warned the bishops to keep Catholic students from their doors.[1] Even a Catholic University, set up and maintained by the Catholics in their poverty, was refused a charter by Lord Palmerston, on the ground that the institution was and would be controlled by Dr. Cullen.[2] There was no attempt made to relieve the Catholics of the oppressive burden of the Established Church, nor was there any attempt made to equitably adjust the relations between landlord and tenant: the result was that a fierce land war raged, in which a small class seemed bent on the extermination of the masses.

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[1] *Parnell Movement*, pp. 106-10.

[2] *Moore Hall Papers*—Speech of Mr. Moore at Kilkenny, June 1859.

[3] *Annual Register*, p. 202.

[4] Barry O'Brien, ii. 282-90, 304-5.

From 1849 to 1856 a million and a half had emigrated, one-fifth of whom had been actually evicted. The strong and healthy were thus leaving the shores of Ireland, and her population, which in 1851 stood at 6,500,000, was reduced in 1861 to 5,760,000.[3] The *Times* wrote exultingly that in another generation the Irish Celts would be as obsolete in Ireland as the Phoenicians in Cornwall, and the Catholic religion as forgotten as the worship of Astarte.[4]

When an Irish property was advertised for sale in the Landed Estates Court, it was regularly mentioned as an inducement to purchasers that the tenants had no leases.[5] It was assumed that the incoming landlord would care nothing for the tenants, and would raise the rents or evict as best suited his purpose. And all over the country tenants were being evicted for non-payment of an impossible rent, for voting against his landlord, for refusing to send his children to the Protestant schools, for getting his daughter married without the previous permission of his landlord, for giving a night's lodging to a stranger, for harbouring an evicted tenant. Tenants were turned out who owed no rent, and turned out in all kinds of weather, and with their whole families—the sick, the aged, the fatherless orphan, the mother with her new-born babe. And those not evicted had to submit to conditions which only slaves could have endured; to the exactions of the landlord, the insolence of the agent, the brutality of the bailiff, the insults of every menial whom the landlord or agent employed. It was not in human nature that these things could be patiently borne, and the harassed tenant, having no hope from Parliament, looked to the Ribbon lodges for vengeance, and he looked not in vain.[1] The evicting landlord or his agent, the over-officious bailiff, the grabber who occupied an evicted holding had one and all need to tremble, and often fell beneath the assassin's hand, and generally unpitied by the people. In Armagh a land-agent was stoned to death in open day, and his murderers, caught red-handed, were acquitted; in Monaghan an agent was beaten to death; in Cavan, a lady; in Westmeath a grabber was shot dead in the presence of three men, who refused to aid the murdered man as he fell mortally wounded; in Clare a landlord's house was set on fire, and house and occupant burned to ashes.[2] A generous and kindly people, maddened by oppression, were being turned into ferocious savages. And yet Parliament would not interfere. But when Palmerston was dead, reaction and privilege lost their stoutest champion; Russell and Gladstone were well known to be friends of reform, and the least observant could not but see that an era of change had come—that the state of Ireland especially demanded attention, and that some attempt must be made to discover a suitable remedy for its ills.

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[1] Locker-Sampson, p. 353.

[2] Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii. 266-7.

[3] *Annual Register*; *Chronicle*, p. 52.

[4] Duffy's *League of North and South*, p. 271.

[5] Godkin's *Land War in Ireland*, p. 326.

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[1] Perraud, pp. 95-100, 130-33.

[2] O'Brien, ii. 253-72.

CHAPTER X

Fenianism and Reform

In the evidence given before the Devon Commission in 1843 the state of Ireland, as affected by its land laws, stands completely revealed. Many of the landlords were too poor to be generous or even just to their tenants. Others, hampered by law of entail, and having nothing more than a life-interest in their property, were reluctant to spend money on improvements.[1] A good proportion were absentees, caring as little for their tenants as for the inhabitants of Timbuctoo. The rule of the agents of these absentees was that of tyranny and not infrequently of corruption. They gave no leases, effected no improvements, seized the buildings made by the tenants, raised the rent on land he had improved, and evicted him, often from mere caprice. In spite of their landlord prejudices, the Devon Commissioners declared that the uncertainty of tenure paralyzed all exertion, and was a fatal bar to improvements.[2] They found that where the Ulster custom was allowed, and tenants could sell the goodwill of their farms, agrarian outrages were rare; where it was not allowed, they were common; that nearly half the holdings in Ireland were less than five acres in extent, and a large proportion of them much less; that in Kerry 66 per cent of the houses were mud-cabins with but one room, in Mayo the percentage was 62, in Cork and Clare 56, and in the rich county of Down it was 25; that the agricultural labourer everywhere was badly housed, badly fed, badly clothed, badly paid for his labour; his home was a mud-cabin, leaky and filled with smoke; his food potatoes and water; his bed the earthen floor, without a blanket to cover him; his property a pig and a heap of manure. They found that in every case of the renewal of a lease the rent was raised; that bailiffs were corrupt and often accepted bribes; that growing crops were seized for rent, a practice which they strongly condemned.[1] These evils were of long standing, and could not be cured at once by legislation. But Parliament could have interfered to give the tenant some sort of security of tenure; it could have stopped the common practice of subdividing holdings; it could have compelled the farmer to build better houses for his labourers; and in a country where there were nearly 4,000,000 acres of improvable waste lands, some employment might be given to redundant labour. What embittered the Irish farmers and labourers was that Parliament did nothing but watch complacently the decimation of a whole people by famine, eviction and emigration; and this while the great English newspaper, the *Times*, gloated over the Irish exodus, and gleefully announced that in a short time a Celt would be as rare in Ireland as a Red Indian on the shores of Manhattan.

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[1] *Devon Commission Report*, Digest of Evidence, pp. 240-41.

[2] *Ibid.* 1122.

As for the landlords they were hopeless. There are few men who will not abuse unlimited power, and the Irish landlords had never adopted any self-denying ordinance in dealing with the tenants. Many of these landlords had been overwhelmed in the famine, but their successors were not less ready than they to oppress and evict, and from 1850 to 1870 was the period of the great clearances. Thousands of the holdings were, it is true, utterly unable to decently support a family, and thousands of the houses levelled were utterly unfit for human habitation. And if the landlord had compensated the tenant and enabled him to emigrate, not altogether destitute and penniless, eviction would have been robbed of the worst of its terrors; and when the Irishman had attained to some measure of comfort in a foreign land, he might have looked back without regret to those days when he rejoiced only in misery and a mud-cabin. Instead of this he had to remember that his landlord had driven him out without compensation, caring nothing about what might be his fate. The exile's heart was sore, and neither time nor distance nor the acquisition of wealth could make him forget the day of his eviction with all its horrors. The worst cases were those—and they were many—where the tenant was sent adrift after having laboured and toiled to improve his holding, after having built and fenced and drained, after having won the bog and mountain to fertility. When all this was done the landlord cast him out, seizing on all the improvements he had made.

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[1] *Devon Commission Report*, pp. 125-6, 418-19, 489-90, 516, 988, 1027, 1132, 1152.

The *Quarterly Review* (in 1854) declared that "the cabins of the peasantry were pulled down in such numbers as to give the appearance, throughout whole regions of the south, and still more of the west, of a country devastated and desolated by the passage of a hostile army."[1] In Westmeath Dr. Nulty saw 700 persons evicted in a single day. In one house were patients delirious in typhus fever, but even that house was pulled down; and as the shades of night fell, the evicted, young and old, cowered under the hedges, drenched with the heavy autumnal rains.[2] In the county of Mayo a whole country-side was emptied of its inhabitants by Lord Lucan, and in the same county even a wider stretch of country was cleared by Lord Sligo. Mr. Pollock's clearances in Galway were equally thorough. In the lap of the Donegal Mountains, the peaceful valley of Glenveigh was (in 1861) cleared in a single day by Mr. Adair. Acting on mere suspicion, he chose to believe the inhabitants guilty of the slaughter of some of his sheep and the murder of his steward, and in spite of the remonstrances of the Protestant minister and of the Catholic priest, he evicted them all. Mr. Sullivan, who did much for the helpless people, described how a widow and her daughters, seeing their home levelled to the earth, raised such piercing cries that strong men burst into tears;

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[1] O'Brien, ii. 267.

[2] *New Ireland*, pp. 122-3.

how an old man of ninety, as he walked out of his home, reverently kissed the door-posts; and how the dispossessed people shivered in the drizzling rain round fires which they had built within sight of their levelled homes.[1] Thus were thousands of Irish peasants banished to foreign lands, bearing in their hearts the bitter memory of wrong; cursing the landlords who had dispossessed them, and the English Government by which these landlords were sustained.

Not all of the landlords, however, deserved these maledictions, for not all were of the type of Mr. Adair. But those who neither evicted nor rack-rented were comparatively few, and in consequence the condition of the mass of the tenants was pitiable. In a country where industries did not flourish, the competition for land was so keen that the landlord could make his own terms. Nor did he consider the tenant in any other light than as a rent-paying machine, to have his rent raised or to suffer eviction at his landlord's good will. If he built a new house then surely he could pay more rent, and his rent was raised; if he fenced or drained or reclaimed, the land was thereby enriched and its letting value was greater; if he or his children dressed comfortably, it was evident that they were comfortable and would pay more rent if only the screw were put on. And there were estate rules which could be imposed only on slaves, and which only those long habituated to slavery could have endured. The tenant was compelled to vote for his landlord's nominee at elections, to send his children to the Protestant school, to get his landlord's permission to marry or to have any of his children married; and he was prohibited from building houses for his labourers, or giving shelter to strangers.[2] On one small estate in Mayo, the Ormsby estate, the old tenants still tell, with blazing eyes, how the landlord fined them if a cow or ass wandered on the road or picked a blade of the landlord's grass; how they had to work even on holidays for the landlord at half wages; and when the harvest came, how they had to cut *his* oats during the day, and then—

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[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 228 *et seq.*

[2] O'Brien, ii. 271-4.

for there was no other time available—how they had to cut their own oats by the light of the harvest moon. Even the bailiff on many estates compelled the tenants to give free labour, and thus were the bailiff's crops sown and saved. And the cases were not a few where the rent was not raised, the ejectment process withdrawn, or the eviction stayed, because the honour of a blushing and beautiful girl was sacrificed to a tyrant's lust. It was these things above all which made weak men strong and cowards brave, which made landlordism an unclean and an accursed thing, and nerved the arm of the assassin.

In spite of Lord Palmerston's landlord sympathies, such a system could not have lasted if there had been an honest and energetic body of Irish members in Parliament. But there was no such body. After 1857 Mr. G. H. Moore was without a seat until 1868. The most prominent of the popular representatives were Mr. J. F. Maguire, Mr. Martin, and The O'Donoghue, and of these Mr. Maguire only was a man of much capacity, and even he was unable to carry a popular movement to success.[1] Towards the end of 1864 Mr. Dillon, then returned from his American exile, started the National Association of Ireland, aided and encouraged by Dr. Cullen. But Mr. Moore would have no connexion with any movement controlled or influenced by Dr. Cullen.[2] Mr. Duffy, who was home on a visit from Australia, having been asked to join, also held aloof, and for the same reason as Mr. Moore; and Mr. Dillon died in 1866 before the Association had gone far.[3]

There were, indeed, Irish members who posed as popular leaders and advocated popular measures. And the aspiring national member during those years, as he stood upon the hustings and asked the people's votes, was glib of tongue and prodigal of promises as man could be. He would vote for an extension of the franchise, for land reform, for the disestablishment of the State Church ; he would support no Government which failed to favour these measures, for he believed in the policy of Independent Opposition. He wanted neither place nor favour, and was satisfied if he could only serve Ireland. These promises and protestations were set off by vague talk about an oppressed people, a land of saints and heroes, and the glorious green flag. Some voters estimated this eloquence and vehemence at its worth, and taking the candidate's bribe, gave him their vote, knowing well that neither he nor his opponent was sincere. But there were others who had not yet sounded the depths of political depravity, and believing in the candidate voted in his favour. To their disgust they soon found how much they had been deceived. When the candidate entered Parliament he at once forgot his promises, scoffed at Independent Opposition, attached himself to the Government, and not a man in the party was more obedient to the crack of the party whip. His reward came in due course. A tide-waitership or a position in the Excise for his illegitimate son, a county court judgeship for a brother at the Bar, a stipendiary magistrateship for a son who was too stupid to succeed at a profession, a fat place at home or a colonial governorship for himself—this was the price given for his Parliamentary support. And if some indignant supporter charged him with his pledge-breaking and treachery, he coolly admitted his offence, chuckled at having made so good a bargain with the Government, and even thanked God that he had a country to sell.[1]

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[1] *Moore Hall Papers.* In 1861 Mr. Moore proposed to establish a new organization—that of the Irish Volunteers—but it came to nothing.

[2] *Writings of Cardinal Cullen*, ii. 283-320.

[3] Duffy's *My Life in Two Hemispheres*, ii. 268-9; *New Ireland*, pp. 307-8.

Such men spoke with no authority in Parliament, and were heard with no respect. Nor could Palmerston and men like him be so much blamed if they had done nothing for Ireland, seeing that the Irish voters had sent such men to the House of Commons.

It was indeed assumed by many English public men that Ireland was content and wanted no experiments in legislation. And a smooth-tongued Viceroy, Lord Carlisle, at Lord Mayor's banquets and cattle-shows, year after year reported, like the sentinel on the watch-tower, that all was well. Crime had decreased, religious animosities were disappearing, agricultural methods were improving, education spreading among the masses, churches and schools multiplied. In ten years the number of mud-cabins had fallen from 491,000 to 125,000, and this necessarily involved the emigration of many thousands, the most vigorous and energetic of the race. But, convinced that Nature intended Ireland to be "the mother of flocks and herds," Lord Carlisle was not alarmed at this exodus. It increased the rate of wages at home, and resulted in bettering the lot of those who went and of those who remained; as if indeed a dwindling population were proof of national prosperity rather than of national decay.[1] This shallow sophistry was considered good enough for the aldermen and cattle-breeders who listened to him, but it did not impose on men of intelligence and patriotism, and was little worthy of a statesman or of an honest public man. Nor was the applause with which Lord Carlisle was greeted able to silence the voice of disaffection, which at that very time turned from the platform and Parliament and sought an outlet through revolutionary channels.

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[1] *Parnell Movement*, pp. 121-3.

As far back as 1847 a general strike against rent was preached in the *Nation* and the *Irish Felon* by James Fintan Lalor, a man of great power of expression, bold, fearless and clear-sighted, of striking and original views and of indomitable will.[2] In spite of the events of that and the following year he was not discouraged, and in 1849 he organized in Munster an insurrection which was even a greater fiasco than Smith O'Brien's attempt of 1848. Next year Lalor died, and nothing was attempted till 1858, when some young men in Cork and Kerry established a revolutionary society. Ostensibly for literary purposes, and called the Phœnix Literary Society, it was really a secret and oath-bound organization, pledged to overthrow British rule in Ireland by force of arms, and believing that the time was opportune when England was fully occupied in putting down the Indian Mutiny. Its headquarters was at Skibbereen, its branches in West Cork and Kerry. The chief of its local leaders was Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. But its real founder was James Stephens, who had a share in the rising of 1848, since then had lived mostly at Paris and mixed much with foreign revolutionists, and in 1858, having returned to Ireland, was acting as private tutor to a gentleman near Killarney. He was a man of good education, with a capacity for organization and secret conspiracy, believing that nothing could be done for Ireland in Parliament, but much by a strong revolutionary society watching England's difficulties and allying itself with her foes. The Phœnix Society, however, soon collapsed. The priests denounced it from the altar. Smith O'Brien and the *Nation*, then under Mr. A. M. Sullivan, publicly assailed it, and the Government arrested the leaders and had them, in 1859, tried by special commission. One prisoner, O'Sullivan, was convicted and sentenced to penal servitude; and then O'Donovan Rossa and the others pleaded guilty and were liberated, and an end had come to the Phœnix Society.[1]

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[1] *Viceregal Speeches*, pp. 75, 97, 102, 159, 184.

[2] Duffy, *Four Years oj Irish History*; W. Dillon's *Life of Mitchel*, i. 150-52, 168-9.

Stephens was not among those arrested, or perhaps suspected, and returning to Paris, began to build up a new and far more formidable society than the Phœnix had ever been. It was called the Irish Republican Brotherhood, or shortly the I.R.B.; but in America, to which it soon spread, it was called the Fenian Society, and its members the Fenians, the name borne by the famous militia of olden days, which were commanded by Finn MacCumhael. Organized into circles, each under a centre, all authority converged through higher centres commanding many circles, towards the head centre, Stephens, who was in supreme command. Thus, while the lesser officers knew little of the organization, and had therefore little to tell if they were traitors, Stephens knew everything, and held the threads of the whole movement in his hands. John O'Mahony was supreme in America; John O'Leary, Thomas Clarke Luby and Charles Kickham in Ireland; and there were agents also in England and Scotland. O'Mahony was a graduate of Trinity College, a man given much to historical studies, and thoroughly honest and sincere. O'Leary, Luby and Kickham were, like O'Mahony, all Munstermen, all well connected and educated, and all—Kickham especially—men of literary capacity. Aiding them at home was O'Donovan Rossa; aiding O'Mahony in America were Doheny, Corcoran and many others.[1]

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[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 196-204; O'Leary, i. 82-91.

Assuming that an Irish republic was formed with the enrolment of the first members, in the Fenian oath allegiance was sworn to the new republic, which necessarily meant a repudiation of English power. Nor was there any difficulty in finding thousands who were ready to take such an oath. Irish landlordism and English law, as administered in Ireland, had planted beyond the Atlantic a new Irish nation more fiercely opposed to England than even the old green island at home.[2] Amid the rush and bustle of American cities, on American farms and railroads, in the lonely log-cabin in American woods, down in the depths of American mines were Irish exiles who thought of England only with a curse. Their fathers had told them of the horrors of the famine days, and they themselves had seen the crowbar brigade at work, the house levelled in which they were born, the fire quenched round which they had gathered to pray at their mother's knee. They had known English law only by its oppressions, and Government only as an instrument of terror. Irish landlordism and English rule they had always seen linked together in injustice, and, as they thought of them, the light of battle was in their eye. Nor would they have hesitated to join with the Hottentot to bring England to the dust. In a country where they were free to speak out, they used language of violence which would not be tolerated at home; and one newspaper in San Francisco openly advocated assassination, and even offered a reward for the murder of individual Irish landlords whom it named. Not all the American Fenians were so bloodthirsty as this, but all hated England and loved Ireland, and gave expression both to their love and hatred in swearing allegiance to the Irish republic. In the American Civil War thousands rushed to arms for one side or the other, and thousands of them fell gloriously on American battlefields. Others, however, passed unscathed through the fire and smoke of battle, and when the Civil War was over in 1865, 200,000 Irish-American soldiers were set free to fight England.

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[1] O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, i. 99-105.

[2] *Ibid.* 120-21.

In Ireland meanwhile the Fenian circles in 1860 and 1861 were being slowly filled. But in the latter year an event occurred which had a stimulating effect. Terence Bellew M'Manus, one of the '48 men, had died in exile in San Francisco, and it was determined to bring his remains to Ireland. Across the American Continent was one long national demonstration, and in Dublin no such funeral procession had been seen since O'Connell's. Tens of thousands from city and country trudged through the streets for hours on that bleak November day, and while the torches blazed amid the fast-falling shades of gathering night, the faces of the spectators—mostly young men—wore a stern resolve to follow in the footsteps of the dead.[1] Freely they joined the Fenian ranks, and when Stephens and Luby went through the country districts subsequently, crowds had already taken or were ready to take the Fenian oath.[2]

Towards the end of 1863 sufficient funds were available to start the *Irish People*, which was the organ of the Fenians. O'Leary was editor, Luby, Kickham and Stephens were among the contributors. Its object was to promote Fenianism; to discredit Parliamentary agitation; to wean the Ribbonmen from agrarian to national objects; to attack all who opposed the Fenian movement, and especially the priests, as unsafe political guides.[3] Much hatred of England was thus stirred up, much opposition to Parliamentary action; and the Ribbonmen, turning from agrarian quarrels and the assassination of landlords, swore allegiance to the Irish republic.[4] And not only did recruits come from the country farmers' sons, from the artisans and shopmen, the students and journalists of the cities and towns, but from many Government offices, from the Dublin police, from the Irish in Great Britain; and thousands of the Irish soldiers in the British Army also joined.[1]

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[1] O'Leary, i. 155-70.

[2] *Ibid.* 180, 188, 198-203.

[3] *Ibid.* i. 250-66; ii. 6-11, 89-111.

[4] *Ibid.* ii. 86-87, 113-27, 180-85.

Fully aware that a Fenian Society existed in America and in Ireland, the Government waited, and the *Times* sneered at the young men who marched and drilled at night, predicting that they would be good British soldiers.[2] Suddenly, however, guided by two informers, Nagle and Power, the *Irish People* in September 1865 was raided by detectives, its printing-press, type and papers seized. O'Leary, Luby, Kickham and O'Donovan Rossa were arrested, and so were many others through the country towns; and special commissions were set up both in Dublin and Cork for the trials. O'Donovan Rossa, having been already concerned with the Phœnix Society, was sentenced to penal servitude for life; O'Leary, Luby and Kickham to twenty years; and others to shorter terms of imprisonment. Stephens evaded arrest until November, and a few nights after being lodged in Richmond in prison he made good his escape. The fact was that some of the prison warders were Fenians, and it was these who opened the prison door for their chief.[3]

Dislocation of Fenian plans necessarily followed the arrest of the Fenian leaders. Stephens reached America only to find his followers suspicious and distrustful, and in 1866 a section of them, repudiating both him and O'Mahony, crossed the frontier into Canada, and attacked England on American soil. During the war promises of help had been made to them by the United States, angry with England for her sympathy with the Southern States. But these promises were easily forgotten, the laws of neutrality were enforced, and the thousands of Fenians hurrying to the frontier were turned back by American arms. The small Fenian force which crossed were soon overpowered by superior numbers, and England rejoiced that all danger was passed. Not yet, however, for Stephens announced that the blow would be struck in Ireland itself, and during the year 1866. But Stephens never came, and his disgusted followers deposed him and elected Colonel Kelly their chief, and under his directions the insurrection broke out in Ireland on the 5th of March 1867. Some collisions with police and soldiers took place at Kilmallock, Tallaght and near Cork, but the rising had no chance of success, for the Government had been forewarned and were amply prepared. Corydon, a Fenian informer who knew much, told all he knew, and in consequence Chester Castle was saved from capture by the Irish in England; General Massy, the military commander, was arrested at Limerick Junction, and the officers, who had come from America in the steamer *Jacknell*, had no sooner landed than they were made prisoners. A terrific snowstorm which began on the 5th of March was also helpful, and showed, not for the first time, that the very elements were aiding England.[1]

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[1] O'Leary, ii. 229-40.

[2] *Ibid.* 195-6.

[3] *Ibid.* 205-25; *Annual Register*, pp. 172-85; *Chronicle*, pp. 232-48.

Within the next few months jails were filled and judges were busy trying prisoners and passing sentences on them. In some cases the conduct of the trials was much complained of, and special resentment was shown towards Judge Keogh, once a patriot and then a renegade, and now lecturing prisoners on the iniquity of rebellion. But to rise in rebellion is an extreme course where failure means ruin, and the prisoners could not so much complain if they were convicted, and if their sentences were severe. In England, however, there was one case which aroused bitter feelings in Ireland. Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy, having escaped to England, were arrested at Manchester in September, but a crowd of Fenians attacked the prison van carrying them, and set them free. In the attack a policeman, Sergeant Brett, lost his life, and five men—Allen, Larken, O'Brien, O'Meagher Condon and Maguire—were tried on the capital charge, convicted and sentenced to death. Maguire, however, was pardoned, not having been present at all at the attack; Condon was pardoned because he was an American citizen; the other three were executed. Certainly they had attacked the prison van, and equally certain it was that they had not committed murder. But it availed nothing. England was enraged against the Fenians and would not be appeased without blood, and throughout the trial the animus of witnesses, jury and judges was apparent. As the prisoners stood in the dock they were manacled, and as they stood on the scaffold a huge crowd gathered to gloat over their execution. These things moved the whole Irish race to indignation. The Manchester martyrs were at once enrolled among the heroes who had bled for Ireland; their cry of "God save Ireland" from the dock was taken up and repeated, and the few stirring lines of T. D. Sullivan, ending with the refrain, have since become the National Anthem.[1]

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[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 274-84.

Undeterred by all that had happened, a Fenian in London named Barrett blew up a portion of Clerkenwell prison, killing twelve persons. This was in December, and in that month and in the following, Captain Mackay, with a few followers, made several daring and successful raids for arms in Cork. But he was captured, convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment, and from that date no further efforts were made by the Fenians, and Fenianism ceased to agitate the public mind, which it had agitated so long.[2]

The average Englishman was shocked at these events. He had been accustomed to accept the periodical platitudes of Lord Carlisle as an accurate description of the state of Ireland, and now he found that all the time widespread disaffection had existed, that beneath an apparently placid surface there burned fierce volcanic fires. One great Englishman, however, knew that Ireland was not content, and could not be. This was John Bright, M.P. for Birmingham. A Quaker with broad human sympathies, an orator of unsurpassed powers either in Parliament or on the platform, he was the champion of the weak and the oppressed in every land. He had studied Irish history, and was familiar with every detail of the infamous Penal Code as he was with the tyranny and greed of Irish landlords, and the corruption of Irish administration; and as to the Irish State Church, he declared that he almost despaired of Ireland, seeing that she had borne this iniquity so long.[1] For more than twenty years his eloquent voice had pleaded for justice, but corrupt Irish representatives had given him little support, and nothing had been done. Nor could anything be done now until Fenianism had been put down. The cry in England was for stern repression, and for a time the old familiar sight of Irish Government was to be seen—the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, the scaffold, the dock, the prison cell. But when the Fenians had been crushed, and the fierce storm of English passion had died down, Englishmen were ready to listen to men like Mr. Bright, and learning what was the extent and the causes of Irish disaffection, they asked themselves if anything could be done for its appeasement.[2]

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[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 284-92; *Speeches from the Dock*, part ii.

[2] *Speeches from the Dock*, part i. 223-38; *Parnell Movement*, p. 136; O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions*, ii. 228-31.

The Irish tenantry were specially anxious for land reform, the Catholic bishops for a Catholic University, but neither the official Whigs nor the Tories would pledge themselves to these concessions, and only the advanced Liberals were willing to follow Mr. Bright, and especially in his attack on the Irish Church. This question then became common ground for the Irish National Association and the English Liberation Society, and in 1865 Mr. Dillwynn, an English member, brought forward a motion in Parliament declaring that the Irish Church Establishment was unsatisfactory, and demanded the early attention of Government.[3] Failing to carry his motion, it was again brought forward in 1866 and in 1867 by Sir John Grey, M.P. for Kilkenny, and each time was unsuccessful. Meantime, in 1866, the Liberal Government had been driven from office, and the Tories under Derby and Disraeli succeeded. More than twenty years before, Disraeli described the Irish question as "a starving population, an absentee aristocracy and an alien Church,"[4] and declared it to be the business of English statesmanship to effect a salutary change. But he was then attacking Peel, and the admittedly unsatisfactory state of Ireland furnished him with a suitable weapon for attack. In 1867 the state of Ireland was even worse than in 1843; but Mr. Disraeli was then in office at the head of a reactionary Tory party, and was therefore not anxious for reform. The time had come, however, when the Irish State Church must cease; the handwriting was on the wall; and Sir John Grey's motion in 1867 was supported by the bulk of the Liberals, and was defeated only by 195 to 183 votes. The next year Mr. Maguire, M.P. for Dungarvan, brought forward a motion on the state of Ireland, and after many days' debate the Liberal leader, Mr. Gladstone, declared for reform. Mr. Maguire then withdrew his motion, after which, on the 23rd of March, Mr. Gladstone brought forward three resolutions: the first declaring that the Established Church of Ireland should cease as an establishment; the second that, pending legislation, no new personal interests should be created; the third praying the Queen to place her interests in Church temporalities at the disposal of Parliament. The Tories had appointed a Royal Commission, and now agreed to reform but not to disestablishment; also they agreed to increase the Regium Donum, and to give a charter to a Catholic University. But Mr. Bright scoffed at these proposals as reminding him of the man who prescribed pills for an earthquake. The further Tory proposal to postpone the question of Disestablishment until after a General Election was also scouted by the Opposition; and Mr. Gladstone's resolutions were proceeded with and carried by large majorities.[1]

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[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 305-6.

[2] *Bright's Speeches*, pp. 51, 73-74.

[3] *Annual Register*, pp. 22-27.

[4] O'Connor's *Lord Beaconsfield*, p. 254.

In spite of these adverse votes Mr. Disraeli clung to office. But he was compelled to dissolve, and on the question of Disestablishment the General Election was fought. On one side was the party of ascendancy appealing to British bigotry with a "No Popery" cry; on the other the party of reformers appealing to British justice. The latter triumphed, and when Mr. Gladstone met the House of Commons as Prime Minister in February 1869, he had a majority of 120 pledged to the

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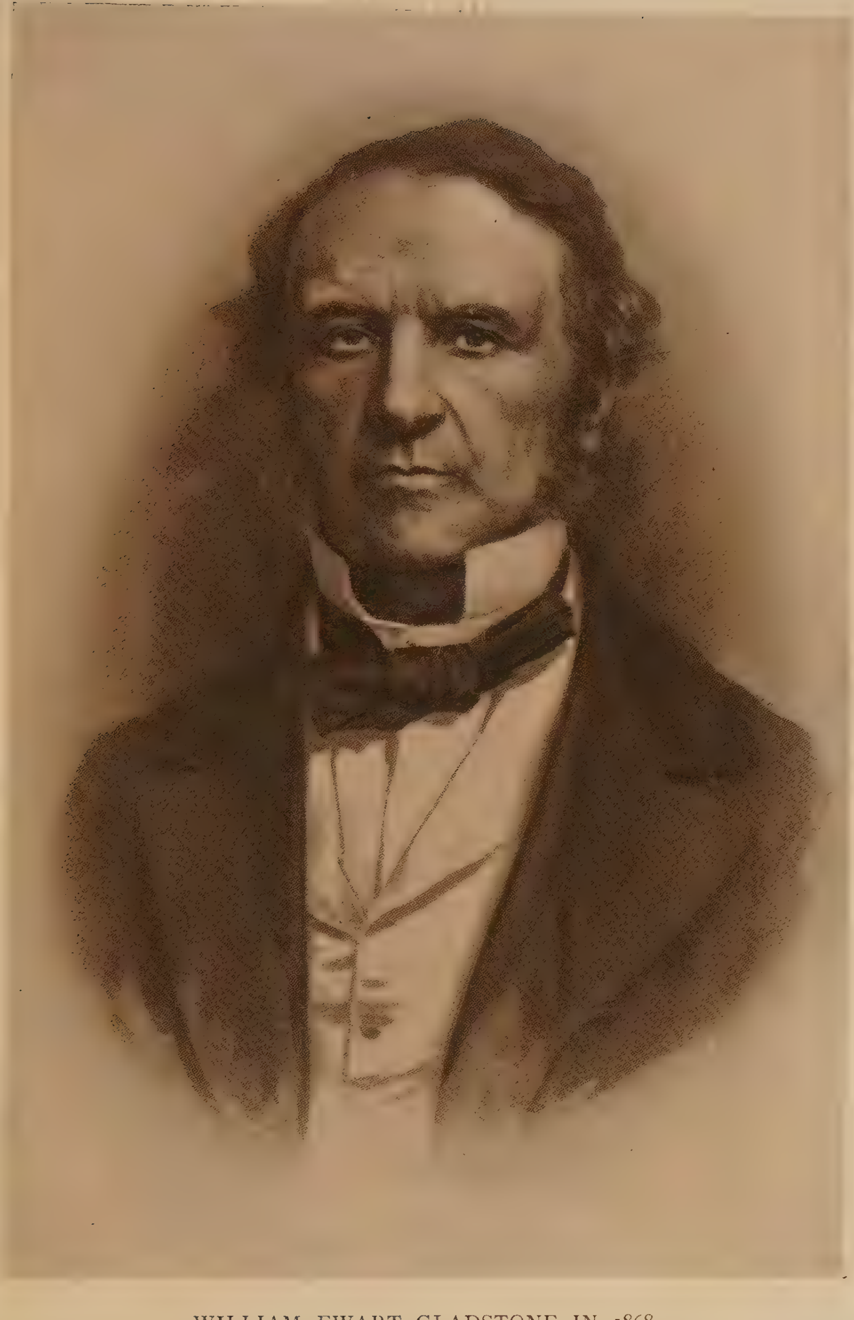
[1] O'Brien, ii. 234-41.



WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE IN 1868

overthrow of the Irish State Church.[1] He was then in his sixtieth year, the most conspicuous figure in the British Empire. Like Burke he seemed to have taken all knowledge for his province, had read everything and remembered everything. Master of many languages, he was intimately acquainted with the whole field of history, discussed questions of theology and philosophy as an expert, could address an Italian audience with fluency in their own tongue, and in speaking and writing ancient Greek could have creditably filled the rôle of an Athenian student of the age of Pericles. As a finance minister he had no equal during the century except Pitt and Peel. As an orator he has had few superiors in any age and none at all in his own. He spoke on every subject with a wealth of information, a dignity of language, a sincerity and earnestness of purpose, always rising with his subject and never falling below it. His fine presence, his manly bearing, his flashing eye, his voice of singular sweetness and power added to his many other advantages; and on the platform and in Parliament, even his ablest and bitterest opponents could not repress their admiration nor resist his attacks. In his youth, as the defender of Church and State, he was described by Macaulay as the rising hope of those stern and unbending Tories. But though fond of power, he preferred to follow his convictions rather than his party, and in 1846 he supported Peel. Gradually he drifted to the Liberal side, and in 1865 Palmerston described him as "a dangerous man," ready to go much farther than the Whig Premier wished him to go. He had then ceased to be loyal to the Irish Church,[2] and opposed Mr. Dillwynn's motion with reluctance. The death of Palmerston and the subsequent retirement of Earl Russell made him leader and left his hands free. To attack the Irish Church he only waited for "the first streaks of dawn," in a suitable opportunity and a ripened public opinion, and when Parliament declared in favour of his Resolutions in 1868, and the nation's approval followed at the General Election, Gladstone, knowing that the dawn had come, grappled at once with "that great scandal and iniquity the Irish Church."[1]

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[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 6-7; Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, i. 885.

[2] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, i. 775-6.

In a speech of three hours' duration he introduced his Bill in March 1869.[2] The mastery of detail, the marshalling of facts, the careful handling of complicated and conflicting interests, the great debating power, the high level of earnestness and eloquence maintained throughout roused the enthusiasm of his supporters and the admiration of his opponents. On the 1st of January 1871 the Irish State Church was to cease its connexion with the English Church and with the Government of the United Kingdom. Calculating its property as worth £15,000,000 and its annual revenue at £700,000, it was to get back £10,000,000, the surplus going to purposes of public utility in Ireland. The Regium Donum and the grant to Maynooth were also to cease, a lump sum amounting to nearly £1,000,000 being given in exchange. Commissioners would take charge of the whole State Church property and carry out the provisions of the Act of Parliament. This was generous treatment of an institution which had been so disastrous a failure. Persecution and penal laws it had freely used, the whole resources of a powerful empire had been placed at its disposal, and yet it had made no progress. In 1801 the Catholics outnumbered all Protestant denominations by four to one, in 1834 by five to one; in 1861, after the famine, the latter proportion was still maintained; and taking only the Episcopalian Protestants, the Catholics outnumbered them by seven to one. In Munster the State Church counted only one in twenty, in Connaught one in twenty-five, in Ulster not more than one in five. A large number of parishes had not a single Protestant, and even from these an absentee minister drew a substantial salary. Mr. Moore, M.P. for Mayo, paid tithes in eight parishes, in not one of which was there a church, a glebe, or a resident Protestant clergyman, and in the diocese of Dublin itself there were nineteen parishes without a single member of the

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[1] Mill, p. 109.

[2] *Annual Register*, pp. 24-29.

State Church; and throughout Ireland there were 199 parishes without any Protestant landlord, tenant or minister, these parishes paying an ecclesiastical revenue of £13,400. Nor had there been any divine service in any of these parishes since the Reformation.[1] And while the Catholic bishops and clergy were burdened with work and poverty, the Protestant clergy, maintained in idleness, often amassed considerable wealth. One bishop left at his death £600,000, another £400,000; and the Archbishop of Tuam, in an almost exclusively Catholic district, left £260,000.[2]

That such a Church should provoke the wrath of Irishmen was to be expected. But it provoked the wrath of Englishmen too, and it was they who described it as "unjustifiable and indefensible," "an anomaly and a grievance," "intolerable robbery"; and Sydney Smith wrote that "there was nothing like it in Europe or Asia or the discovered parts of Africa, or in all we have heard of Timbuctoo."[3] Nor did the greater part of the Tory orators make any serious effort to defend it in 1869, though there was talk of confiscation and plunder and sacrilege. Mr. Butt, M.P. for Trinity College, Dublin, and Mr. Hardy, M.P. for Oxford University, took higher and surer ground when they pointed to the Act of Union, declaring that the maintenance of the State Church was fundamental; and in pressing their argument and others, both these gentlemen showed ability and zeal. But Mr. Gladstone easily overwhelmed them in argument and in the division lobbies, and the Bill passed the House of Commons in the end of May.[4] In the Lords it passed its second reading, but was grievously emasculated in Committee and then returned to the House of Commons.[5] Mr. Gladstone, however, was in no humour for surrender or compromise, the Lords' amendments were rejected, and for a time a struggle seemed imminent between both Houses of Parliament.[6]

The intervention of the Queen herself with some of the bishops, the tact and patience of Lord Granville, the firmness of Mr. Gladstone, and the loyalty with which his party supported him were the chief factors in securing peace. An additional sum of £840,000 was given the disestablished Church, and it was agreed that the surplus should be under the control of Parliament. Militant and unyielding, old Lord Derby and a few others pronounced these concessions inadequate. But the wiser counsels of Lord Cairns and the Archbishop of Canterbury prevailed; the Lords accepted the amendments and passed the Bill, which received the Royal Assent on the 26th of July, and on the 1st of January 1871 the Irish State Church ceased to exist. And thus, after a long and inglorious career, a mischievous and hated institution came crashing to the earth. Sheltering every abuse, sanctioning every oppression, the tool of tyranny and the apologist of corruption, it fell amid the execrations of millions of Irishmen whom it had so long impoverished and enslaved.[1]

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[1] Brady, *The Irish State Church*, pp. 159-61.

[2] O'Brien, ii. 189-205.

[3] *Ibid.* ii. 175-6.

[4] *Annual Register*, pp. 30-69.

[5] *Ibid.* 71-106.

[6] *Ibid.* 108-14.

The next year Mr. Gladstone passed an Irish Land Act, which legalized the Ulster and other analogous customs, provided compensation for capricious evictions, and gave facilities in certain cases to tenants to buy out their holdings. Peasant proprietary had been frequently advocated by Mr. Stuart Mill and Mr. Bright;[2] and the clauses in the Land Act were due to the latter, and were often called after his name. The Act, if honestly administered, would have done much for Irish tenants. But the landlords, not scrupulous where their interests or prejudices were concerned, managed by various devices to defeat the provisions of Mr. Gladstone's Act. In spite of it tenants were rack-rented and evicted, few peasant proprietors were created, and the Act, a failure itself, was but the first in a long series of measures of land reform.[3]

[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 115-19; Morley, i. 903-14.

[2] *Bright's Speeches*, p. 126.

[3] O'Brien, ii. 307-12; *Annual Register*, pp. 20-49.

CHAPTER XI

The Home Rule Movement

In May 1870, in the Bilton Hotel, Dublin, a number of representative Irishmen gathered together to take counsel about the state of Ireland. The diversity of creed and class and political views recalled the Tenant Right Conference of 1850. There were Protestants and Catholics, Tories and Liberals, Orangemen, Fenians and Repealers. Dr. Maxwell of the *Mail* was a militant Tory; Major Knox, the proprietor of the *Irish Times*, a Protestant Conservative; Mr. A. M. Sullivan of the *Nation*, a Catholic Repealer; James O'Connor, a Fenian; John Martin, a Presbyterian and a Young Irelander; Mr. Galbraith, a Trinity College professor; Captain King-Harman, a Protestant landlord; Archdeacon Gould, a Protestant clergyman; Isaac Butt, a Protestant lawyer; Mr. Purdon, the Protestant Lord Mayor of Dublin.

Among so many Irishmen of position and education, wealth and talent were well represented; but in general ability, in knowledge and experience of public affairs, in oratorical power, in the qualities essential to statesmanship, Isaac Butt towered high above them all. Born in Donegal in 1815, he was called to the Bar in 1838, became Queen's Counsel in 1844, and so rapidly did he rise in the esteem of the Tory party, to which he belonged, that in the great debate on Repeal in the Dublin Corporation in 1843, he was selected as the Tory champion to defend the Union against O'Connell. Nor was his speech unworthy of his great antagonist. Entering Parliament in 1852, he soon made his mark as a speaker, and long before 1870 he was as an orator and an advocate without a rival at the Irish Bar. With conspicuous ability he defended

Gavan Duffy in 1848, and he defended the Fenians in 1865 and in the subsequent years. It is probable that his experience thus acquired turned his thoughts from Tory to Nationalist ways. His nature was generous, his heart was warm and kind, and seeing so many gifted and chivalrous men sacrifice everything in a hopeless struggle for Ireland, he gradually grew to condemn the system of government under which they suffered. His pamphlet on Irish Land Tenure was a scathing indictment of Irish landlordism and a splendidly reasoned case for reform. The scenes he witnessed at Irish railway stations, when emigrants were parting from their broken-hearted friends, touched his heart, and in language of singular eloquence and power he lamented the terrible exodus which inevitably would involve the rapid extinction of an ancient race.

When therefore he spoke to the audience at the Bilton Hotel, it was no longer as a Tory, but as a Nationalist and reformer, anxious that Irish Government should be brought into harmony with the people's views, anxious that the Irish peasant, rooted in the soil by equitable laws, should cease to turn his face towards the setting sun. A few years before this his audience would not have listened. But many things had recently happened. Attached to Protestant ascendancy, the Orangemen and Protestant Conservative had seen it disappear with the overthrow of the State Church. The landlords bitterly resented the invasion of their rights and privileges by Gladstone's Land Act, and feared that worse might come. The Fenians, who expected great things from an insurrection, saw only the fiasco of 1867, and the enforcement of neutrality laws by the United States deprived them of the hope of striking at England on American soil. Protestant and Catholic, Liberal and Conservative, Repealer and Fenian were satisfied that the Union had been a failure, and were therefore disposed to listen when Mr. Butt assailed the British Parliament. Nor was there a dissentient voice raised when he proposed "that it is the opinion of this meeting that the true remedy for the evils of Ireland is the establishment of an Irish Parliament, with full control over our domestic affairs." Thus was the Home Rule movement ushered into existence by the founding of the "Home Government Association." Its policy was not repeal but Federal Home Rule, thus going back to the ideas of Sharman Crawford as opposed to those of O'Connell. There was to be no interference with Imperial questions, with the rights of the Crown, the position of the Colonies, the army or navy. The proposed Irish Parliament was to deal only with the internal affairs of Ireland, leaving all other questions to the Imperial Parliament. The co-operation of all classes of Irishmen was invited, and public opinion was to be influenced by speeches and writings on behalf of the new Association.[1]

In a short time the movement made progress, and at parliamentary elections in 1871, four Home Rulers headed the polls. Mr. Butt himself was elected for Limerick, Mr. Mitchell Henry for Galway, Mr. P. J. Smith for Westmeath, Mr. John Martin for Meath. The following year the Home Ruler, Mr. Blennerhasset, captured Kerry after a fierce battle; and Captain Nolan headed the poll at Galway. The latter, however, was unseated on petition, and the seat given to his Tory opponent, Captain Trench; Judge Keogh, who tried the petition, declaring that Nolan's clerical supporters had been guilty of spiritual intimidation of the worst kind. And he denounced not only a few of the priests but all, and in language so coarse and virulent that friends and foes alike were shocked at such a tirade coming from the seat of justice, a tirade which recalled the worst days of Lord Norbury.

The following year a very representative conference of Home Rulers was held in the Rotunda, which lasted for three days, and resulted in establishing the Home Rule League. Its policy was that of the Home Government Association, which then ceased to exist; its immediate business to prepare the parliamentary register so as to be ready for the General Election which was known to be near; and in Parliament the Home Rule members were to be a distinct and separate party, acting on the lines of independent opposition.[2]

Mr. Gladstone, though friendly to Ireland, viewed the Home

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[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 339-46.

[2] *Ibid.* 381-3.

Rule movement with disfavour. In taking office in 1868 he declared his mission to be the pacification of Ireland,[1] and for this purpose he determined to cut down the three-branched Upas tree of ascendancy. Two of the branches had been laid low by his vigorous strokes in 1869 and in 1870, when he destroyed the State Church and put the Land Act on the Statute Book. There yet remained an educational ascendancy, for the Catholics could not avail themselves of Trinity College, or of the Queen's Colleges, without doing violence to their religious convictions. Before approaching this subject, however, Mr. Gladstone passed the Ballot Act, which, by substituting secret for open voting, freed the Irish tenant from being terrorized by his landlord. This Act passed in 1872, and in the following year Mr. Gladstone's University Bill was introduced. It was a thorny subject to handle. Trinity College, in selfish isolation, would not throw open its Fellowships and Scholarships to Catholics, or even be associated with a Catholic College in the Dublin University. The Queen's University and its colleges were avowedly secularist, and as such effectually barred the Catholics out. And the Catholic University supported by voluntary contributions had not the income or equipment necessary for University work, and could get neither grant nor charter from Parliament. In Mr. Gladstone's Bill the Queen's University disappeared and the Queen's College, Galway, a clear distinction being made between Dublin University and Trinity College. The first named was to be the only University in Ireland, while Trinity College, the Queen's Colleges of Belfast and Cork, the Catholic University and Magee College, were all to be constituent colleges. Other colleges might in time be affiliated. The grant of £12,000 a year hitherto given to the Galway College would be given to the new Dublin University, which was also to get £10,000 from Trinity College, and £28,000 from the Church Surplus Fund—in all, an income of £50,000 a year. All tests were to be abolished in the University, and no chairs of theology, mental and moral philosophy or modern history were to be endowed, though such chairs might be set up by private endowment.

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[1] Morley, i. 886.

The Council of the University was to be representative of the various colleges, and to some extent in proportion to the number of matriculated students, and after a time the new Council would be replaced by another, appointed partly by the Crown, partly by the Council itself, partly by the professors of the University, and partly by the Senate. The vacancies would arise by a certain number of the Council retiring every year by rotation, even if there were no casual vacancies by death or other causes.

The Bill was to grapple with a long-standing grievance and satisfy the Catholics without doing injustice to other creeds. But it satisfied no party or creed. The Catholics complained that two Queen's colleges were still endowed, while their own Catholic University received nothing. The Protestants complained that violent hands were being laid on Trinity College. The secularists condemned the suppression of the Galway College, and predicted with alarm that the system of filling vacancies on the University Council would in time throw the whole University education of the country into the hands of the Catholic bishops. Finally, men asked what sort of University that would be which gave no official recognition to such subjects as mental and moral philosophy and modern history. The result was that the Conservatives and the Irish Catholic Liberals coalesced, and the Bill was defeated by a narrow majority.[1] Mr. Gladstone at once resigned; but Mr. Disraeli, not having a majority of the House, refused to form a Government, and Gladstone and his colleagues returned to office. The Liberals, however, were discredited by their defeat and lost heavily at by-elections during the year, and in the following January Parliament was dissolved. The Liberals suffered a severe defeat, Mr. Gladstone resigned, and Mr. Disraeli became Premier with a strong majority at his command.

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[1] *Annual Register*, pp. 11-32, the numbers being 284 against 287; Dr. Walsh's *The Irish University Question*, pp. 41-42; *Writings of Cardinal Cullen*, iii. 501.

In Ireland, as indeed in England, the dissolution had come as a surprise. The Home Rule League had not had time to perfect its organization, and was therefore not prepared with suitable candidates; and Mr. Butt, and not for the first time, was in such pecuniary difficulties that he had to fly to England to escape imprisonment for debt. In these circumstances the battle was fought at the polls, and yet, so powerfully did the demand for an Irish Parliament appeal to the masses, that sixty members were returned pledged to Home Rule. Some indeed were but nominal Home Rulers: these were lawyers who desired a seat in Parliament as a stepping-stone to the Bench, landlords with social ambitions, Whigs who in their hearts regarded Mr. Gladstone as too advanced a reformer, Tories who would vote for a Home Rule motion in Parliament for one day in the year, and for the rest of the year might be relied on by the Tory whips. There were, indeed, a few sound and honest Home Rulers, such as Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Ronayne, Mr. John Martin, Mr. Biggar, Mr. O'Connor Power and a few others. But the majority were dishonest and insincere, and quite as willing to sell Ireland as were Sadleir and Keogh in earlier days.

It would be difficult for any leader to make such a party an effective force in Parliament, and Mr. Butt was certainly unequal to the task. He was a great orator and debater, little inferior to Mr. Gladstone himself. But he was then old, too old for vigorous action, and his habits, always desultory and irregular, ill fitted him to reconcile jarring elements or vigorously enforce discipline. His pecuniary embarrassments made it necessary for him to devote a good part of his time to the practice of his profession, and he had not the leisure, and perhaps not the inclination, to create and maintain a strong popular agitation outside Parliament which would supply a useful stimulus to parliamentary action. With profound admiration for the British Constitution, and profound veneration for the great traditions of the British Parliament, he had a strong faith in British justice, and believed that by reason and argument the justice of Ireland's claims would ultimately obtain recognition. Yet he made no headway. Both British parties agreed in declaring that Home Rule was beyond the range of practical politics, and both joined in voting every Home Rule motion down. In 1874 a Home Rule amendment to the Address was defeated by 288 votes, another in 1876 by 258 votes, and a further one in 1877 met a similar fate. And even minor questions, such as the extension of the franchise or the amendment of the Land Act of 1870, fared no better. The Municipal Franchise Bill of 1874 was thrown out by 111 of a majority; that of the following year by 100 votes. The Irish Municipal Corporations Bill of 1875, the Irish Fisheries Bill, the Irish Borough Franchise Bill of 1876, the Land Bill of 1875, a motion for inquiry into the working of the Land Act, the Irish Land Bill of 1877, were one and all rejected by crushing majorities.[1]

Year after year not a mention of Ireland was found in the Queen's Speeches, or if any such was found it was to announce the introduction of a Coercion Bill, or to continue a Coercion Act already on the Statute Book. And in passing these measures the Liberals were as prompt to give their votes as the Conservatives. The latter were especially strong after the election of 1874, and their position was still further strengthened by the fact that Mr. Gladstone, early in 1875, definitely retired from the leadership of the Liberal party. His successor was the Marquis of Hartington, a member of the great house of Cavendish and heir to the Duke of Devonshire, a Liberal by tradition, a Conservative by conviction, an enemy to all reform, and especially to Irish reform. As Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1871, he had an attack made by the police on a peaceful amnesty meeting in the Phœnix Park. He was ever ready to resist even the smallest concession to Ireland, and ever ready to advocate every measure of coercion; and the *Annual Register*[2] notes that when the Coercion Bill of 1875 was before the House of Commons, Lord Hartington was "more ministerial than the Ministerialists," that is, more coercionist than the coercionists. English members, indeed, barely tolerated Mr. Butt and his friends when they demanded reform, and English newspapers could only say that after all "a large allowance must be made for the vivid fancy of Irishmen."[1] The Irish Land question they thought was settled and done with, and any attempt to revive it was a wicked and wanton attempt to reopen a sore which had already healed. Thus, unable to accomplish anything for Ireland, and in consequence dejected and dispirited, Mr. Butt plodded wearily on. Every session had its own crop of motions rejected, of Bills thrown out, of eloquent speeches addressed to ears that would not hear. Like the fabled island in the Western Ocean, Home Rule receded still farther as time advanced. The Fenians, with little faith in parliamentary action, were losing the little faith they had, and every day an increasing number of Irishmen were becoming more convinced than ever that the Home Rule party were powerless for good, and were but laboriously and painfully ploughing the sands.

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[1] *New Ireland*, pp. 396-8.

[2] *Annual Register*, p. 17.

As early as 1874, at a private meeting of the Irish Party, Mr. Ronayne, M.P. for Cork, proposed that the Irish members should interfere more in English and Imperial questions, especially those questions which specially affected the working classes. English sympathy for Ireland would thus be evoked, reactionary legislation would be thwarted, and English members who had so often obstructed and defeated Irish measures of reform would have the weapon of obstruction turned against themselves. Mr. Ronayne, however, found little support in the party, and none at all from Mr. Butt, and he died in 1876 without any serious attempt having been made to give practical effect to his views. And meantime the old futile way was continued, and while the Irish members held aloof from English and Imperial measures, the English members rejected every Irish measure except Coercion Acts with scorn.

But there were two Irish members who believed Mr. Ronayne's suggestions to be good. These were Joseph Gillis Biggar, who represented Cavan, and Mr. Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P. for Meath. Mr. Biggar was a native of Belfast and had come of a Presbyterian stock. He was a wealthy man, having made his money in trade, and when he entered Parliament in 1874 was forty-six years of age. At school or college he had learned little, and indeed cared little for books or for those who read or wrote them. But he had a talent for figures, and was a shrewd man of business, practical, matter-of-fact and unimaginative. He had become a Catholic and a Fenian, and was in fact one of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. when he entered Parliament. Of public affairs he had no experience, except as a member of the Belfast Water Board. He had no taste and no respect for oratory, was quite unable to make a speech, and with his rasping voice and uncouth appearance was ill fitted to make his mark in Parliament. For that assembly he had no respect, and none for the good opinion of the English people, whom he hated and despised. He was intensely and fiercely Irish, and wanted work done for Ireland, and as the English Parliament would have no such work done his ambition was to bring English legislation also to a standstill. He had no hope that Butt would get anything by conciliating the English people, thinking it better to make them uncomfortable and enrage them.[1] In 1875 he proceeded to give these ideas tangible shape. A Coercion Bill was before the House of Commons, and Biggar determined that if he could not defeat it, at least he would delay its passage. For four continuous hours he talked against the Bill. What he said was not a reasoned speech, nor an argumentative presentation of facts, nor a calm appeal to justice or fair-play, nor an impassioned plea for a nation that had suffered so many wrongs. It was a mixture of newspaper reports, of resolutions of public bodies, of evidence given before a Parliamentary Committee regarding outrages in Westmeath, and of occasional comments of his own, which were neither striking nor new. Called to order by the Speaker, who could not hear him, Mr. Biggar calmly shifted his place from below the gangway to the Treasury Bench, and repeated all that he had previously said. Time was thus wasted, a Coercion Bill was impeded, Parliament was disgusted, the English people irritated, and Mr. Biggar himself satisfied. And these tactics he frequently repeated in the session of 1875, and again in the following year.[1]

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[1] *New Ireland*, p. 398.

[2] *Ibid.* 438.

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[1] O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, i. 81.

Mr. Parnell was a much abler and a much more remarkable man than Mr. Biggar. His family came originally from Congleton in Cheshire, where one Thomas Parnell, a draper, was mayor in the reign of James I. The mayor's son was a prominent Cromwellian, and his grandson in the reign of Charles II. leaving England altogether, settled in Ireland, where he purchased an estate. One of *his* sons, Thomas, was the well-known poet, another son was a judge, and the son of the latter was also a judge, and the first baronet of the name. The second baronet was the famous Sir John Parnell, Chancellor of the Exchequer, the friend of Grattan, the uncompromising opponent of the Union. After the Union his eldest son sat in the United Parliament, was a member of Lord Grey's Ministry, and became ennobled with the title of Lord Congleton. The peer's younger brother was William, who lived at Avondale in Wicklow, and who wrote *An Historical Apology for the Irish Catholics.* The grandson of this William was Mr. Biggar's friend, Charles Stewart Parnell. He was born at Avondale in 1846. His mother was a daughter of Commodore Stewart of the American Navy, who had fought the English and beat them in the war of 1812 and 1814; and the daughter hated England and the English people for their "arrogance, greed, cant and hypocrisy." "They are simply thieves," she said—language which is certainly strong, whatever may be thought of its justice.[2]

Mr. Parnell fully shared his mother's antipathy to England. And yet in manner and temperament he was much more English than Irish. Cold, unemotional, imperturbable, he had none of the wit or fire or enthusiasm of the Irish Celt; he was not eloquent and hated oratory, nor had he any ambition in public speaking but to say what he had to say in the fewest possible words. A Protestant in religion and educated at

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[1] O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 81-85.

[2] *Ibid.* 1-29.

CHARLES STEWART PARNELL

Protestant schools in England, he subsequently entered Cambridge University, though he did not graduate, and neither in the preliminary schools nor at the University had he given any evidence of superior talent. He had little taste for reading and derived little knowledge from books. His strength was not in his intellect, but in his will, and even in his earliest years he showed himself masterful, domineering, autocratic, impatient of control or contradiction, and always ready to avenge an insult with a blow. Defective in imagination, he confined himself to hard facts, estimated accurately the difficulties to be overcome and the means at his disposal, and when he satisfied himself that a thing ought and could be done, nothing could turn him from his purpose.[1]

After leaving Cambridge in 1869, he lived for some years the rather vacuous life of a country squire—shot, played cricket, rode to hounds, held a commission in the militia, attended grand jury meetings, and filled the office of High Sheriff of Wicklow. Until 1874, when he joined the Home Rule League, he took no part in politics. But he shared his mother's good opinion of the Fenians, and was very indignant because her home in Dublin had been searched by the police. His sister Fanny had written poetry in 1865 for the Fenian newspaper, *The Irish People*; and Parnell himself had scandalized the House of Commons by declaring that the Manchester martyrs were not murderers. In 1874 he contested Dublin County as a Home Ruler, but was beaten. He made a bad impression as a speaker, but he showed grit and determination, and was the bearer of an historic name; and Mr. Butt rejoiced that when Mr. John Martin, M.P., died in 1875, Mr. Parnell was selected as his successor in the representation of Meath.

In the sessions of 1875 and 1876 he was not very active in Parliament. He sat a silent and watchful spectator, and learned the rules of the House. But in 1877 he came into prominence. By that time he had satisfied himself that Butt's methods of argument and conciliation were useless, and that in the obstructive tactics of Mr. Biggar was the only hope for

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[1] *Vide* General Butler's *The Light of the West*, pp. 52-91.

Ireland in Parliament. To talk out a Government measure on Wednesday evening as the clock pointed to six, and on other nights as it pointed to the half-hour after midnight, was effective obstruction, because after these hours the rules of Parliament prohibited the consideration of contentious Bills. And to talk at random for the purpose of lengthening out debate was wasting time. But Parliament had a great reserve of strength, an almost limitless power of protecting itself, and could easily put down manifest obstruction. Mr. Parnell saw this. He wanted to waste time as much as Mr. Biggar, but he wanted to conceal his purpose. Theoretically, at least, English and Irish members had equal rights, and if the former interfered to thwart Irish measures, the latter might surely discuss English measures, especially if the discussions were in the interests of justice and public liberty, and for the protection of English minorities, and against the class and selfish legislation of a tyrannical majority. This is what Mr. Parnell did. By moving amendments and challenging discussions he modified the harshest clauses of the Prisons Bill and the Mutiny Bill; he improved the Factories and the Workshops Bill and the Army Discipline Bill; and he made a determined stand against the South African Bill annexing the Transvaal to the British Empire. The friends of humanity appreciated his efforts, and on the Mutiny Bill sixty English members were on his side. More frequently, however, he was almost alone, always with his faithful friend, Mr. Biggar, to whom were soon added Mr. O'Connor Power, Mr. O'Donnell, Mr. Gray, Major Nolan, Major O'Gorman and a few others. Sometimes his whole party numbered ten, sometimes only five, but whether the greater or lesser number, they obstructed Bills, thwarted the Government, and wasted the time of the House of Commons.

The Tory Government were enraged. They could tolerate obstruction by an English party, or even by a small fraction of an English party. They could tolerate an Irish party opposing a Coercion Bill; but to have a small minority of the Irish Party obstructing English business was unendurable and must be put down. When, therefore, any of these Irish obstructives rose to address the House, English members shouted, coughed, talked loud, hoping to wear out the patience of the speaker. Mr. Biggar retorted by putting after every English Bill which was introduced the notice that it be read a second time that day six months, thus making it contentious and destroying its chances of becoming law. Or, again, Mr. Parnell moved amendment after amendment, and when interrupted moved that the Chairman leave the chair. The taunts and sneers of members or of the newspapers affected him not the least. Disdaining to notice them, he grimly held his ground and only obstructed all the more. Sir Stafford Northcote was then leader of the House, the Premier, Mr. Disraeli, having gone to the Lords in 1876 as Earl of Beaconsfield. Sir Stafford was not a strong man, but he was irritated at the Irish obstructives, and determined to wear them out as perhaps the best way to put them down. On the Prisons Bill the sittings were prolonged till three in the morning, by which time the Irish were exhausted and the Government had their way.[1] On the Mutiny Bill there were more late sittings and stormy scenes.[2] On the South African Bill the climax was reached. By a system of relays the Government kept the House sitting for twenty-six consecutive hours. Mr. Parnell and his little band—seven in all—doggedly fought on, moving to report progress, moving that the Chairman leave the chair, and thus challenging division after division through the long watches of the night. In a contest of endurance, however, victory was with the big battalions, and at last the South African Bill passed through Committee.[3]

In these contests not only did the vast majority of the Liberals side with the Government, but even the majority of the Home Rulers also. And even Mr. Butt was induced to interfere and to condemn. Mr. Parnell would not give way even on some harmless clauses of the Mutiny Bill, and was deaf to all appeal. Mr. Butt was then approached by some of his own followers and by English Conservatives also. The latter flattered him by begging that he would save the dignity of Parliament, and in response to this appeal he turned on Mr. Parnell with language of scathing severity.[1] The latter then yielded, but in a public letter complained of being attacked, and between the two a heated correspondence followed, Mr. Parnell firmly holding his ground. English public opinion was strongly with Mr. Butt, but with the Irish people the positions were reversed. After Parliament had been prorogued a great meeting was held in the Rotunda in the last days of August, and when Mr. Parnell and Mr. Biggar appeared on the platform the cheers that greeted them were loud and long. A few days later the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain held its annual meeting at Liverpool. An offshoot of the Home Rule League of Ireland, it was a much more militant organization, being largely recruited from the Fenian ranks. Hitherto it had elected Mr. Butt as its annual President, but recent events had alienated its allegiance, and in 1877 Mr. Butt was dethroned and Mr. Parnell took his place.[2]

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[1] *New Ireland*, p. 418.

[2] *Ibid.* 422.

[3] *The Parnell Movement*, pp. 159-60; *New Ireland*, pp. 426-7; *Annual Register*, 1877, pp. 46-50.

Within the next few months the new President addressed meetings both in Great Britain and in Ireland, vigorously defending an active policy in Parliament, and asking the friends of Ireland everywhere to aid him in this policy. Mr. Butt, however, still clung to the old methods, and at a conference of Irish members in the City Hall, Dublin, in October, he violently assailed obstruction as ruinous to Irish interests. He renewed the attack at a Home Rule conference in Dublin in the following January. He was convinced that the best policy was to continue appealing to liberal-minded Englishmen, to do this persistently but temperately, without trenching upon the rights of England or lowering the dignity of Parliament. Mr. Parnell was willing to agree with this view if all English members, or even a great majority of them, were liberal-minded. But he denied that they were; they were thinking only of their party and of its interests, and had no wish to redress or even listen to Irish grievances. Nor was Mr. Parnell the man to surrender

[1] *Parnell Movement*, p. 158.

[2] O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 142-5.

opinions patiently and carefully formed, and this conference, which was called to end discord and promote peace, left matters unchanged.[1] Yet the obstructives were not especially active in the session of 1878. Much of Mr. Parnell's time was spent on a Parliamentary Committee appointed to consider how best to facilitate public business, which really meant how best to stamp out obstruction. The Committee in due course made its suggestions, from which Mr. Parnell differed in a minority report;[2] and though these suggestions received the sanction of Parliament next year, public business was not advanced.

In the meantime the Government passed in the session of 1878 an Irish Intermediate Act. While still leaving the Royal Free Schools and Erasmus Smith Schools to Protestants, it set up for all, Catholics as well as others, a system of public examinations, and with a capital sum of £1,000,000 taken from the Church Surplus Funds, it provided scholarships and prizes to successful students, and to intermediate schools gave large sums by way of result fees.[3] The followers of Mr. Butt pointed in triumph to this Act as the best justification of Mr. Butt's policy. And Mr. Butt himself, in the closing days of the year, wrote a public letter again condemning obstruction in vigorous terms. He asked in indignation how any right-minded man could take the oath of allegiance to the Queen, and then use his power as a member of Parliament to thwart and baffle all her measures.[4] This language was very grateful to English public opinion, as it was to nominal Home Rule members. But it did not promote peace in the Irish Party, it won Mr. Butt no new adherents, nor did it weaken Mr. Parnell's determination to continue an active policy, nor lessen his influence with the masses of the Irish people. A further vigorous defence of his policy, and a vigorous attack on his opponents by Mr. Butt in February 1879, were equally barren of results. The obstructives remained unmoved, and their young leader was unconvinced and undismayed.[5]

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[1] O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 150-54.

[2] *Ibid.* 155.

[3] O'Brien, *Fifty Years of Concessions to Ireland*, ii. 324-26.

[4] *Annual Register*, pp. 209-10.

[5] *Parnell Movement*, pp. 161-3.

By that time the old leader was nearing the end. And undoubtedly the events of the last couple of years hastened his death. Anxious for success, he felt that he had failed. He could see nothing but ruin in Mr. Parnell's policy, but he gradually realized that it was winning adherents and that he himself was losing ground; and in 1878 he wished to retire from Parliament. His resignation was not accepted by the nation and he was persuaded to remain. But he could not attend regularly in Parliament, having to depend on his profession for a living.[1] In addition to this his health began to fail. In the summer of 1878 he told his friend, Dr. O'Leary, of weakness, of palpitation, of uneasy sensations at the heart, of a want of readiness and vigour of thought, and he feared that the end was not far distant. He soon rallied, however, and at the meeting in February 1879 his great powers seemed at their best. Yet even a casual observer could see that death was near. After the meeting he fell ill, and on the 13th of May following the end came.[2] With the modesty of greatness his desire was that he should be buried in the little churchyard of his native parish of Stranorlar, with as little expense as possible, and without ostentation or parade.[3] Thus, in accordance with his own wish, there was no great funeral procession, no grave in Glasnevin, no proud monument, no inscription to recount his services to the land he loved well. But his countrymen bore him in kindly remembrance, and if many thought it fortunate for Ireland that he then passed away, it was because they saw that his policy had failed and his methods had grown obsolete; because in the stormy times that had come it was necessary that the helm should be grasped by a more vigorous hand.

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[1] *Parnell Movement*, p. 162.

[2] O'Brien's *Parnell*, i. 179-82.

[3] Davitt's *Fall of Feudalism*, pp. 96-97.

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